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**08/**

**NEWS** Aston Martin DB12 • BMW 5 Series • Volvo EX30 • Lexus LBX **LAUNCH PAD** Mercedes-Benz GLC • Volvo C40 Recharge • Toyota Urban Cruiser • GWM Tank 300 • Fiat 500X **DEEP DRIVE** BMW i7 • Range Rover Sport • Toyota RAV4 PHEV • Honda Civic Type R • Suzuki Grand Vitara **FEATURE** Fastest A45 AMG in Africa • People pleaser: owning a classic VW Beetle **BIKE** Indian Motorcycles Chief Dark Horse **LIFESTYLE** Electric Avenue • Sound on: Denon speakers • Riding shotgun with Jack Parow • **CLASSICS** The Boss: Opel Kadett GSi Superboss

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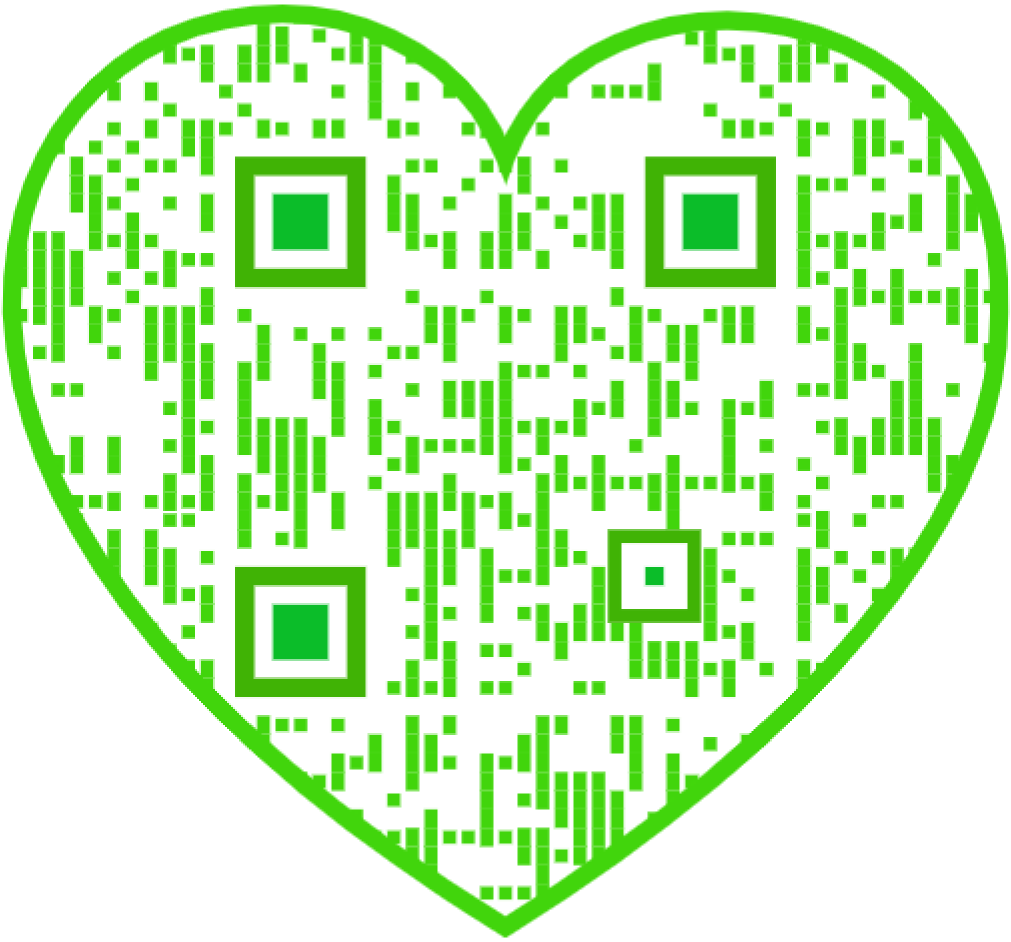

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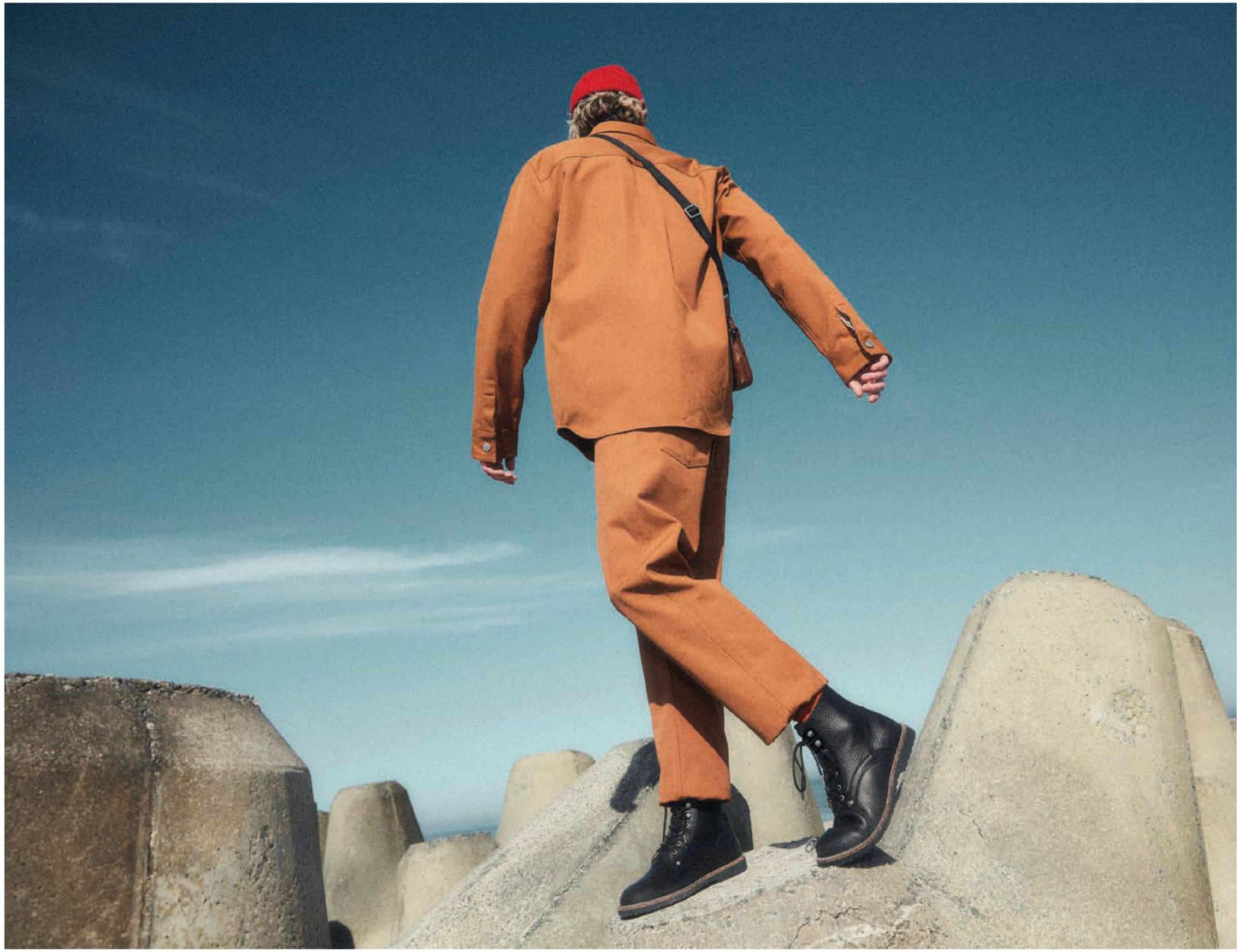

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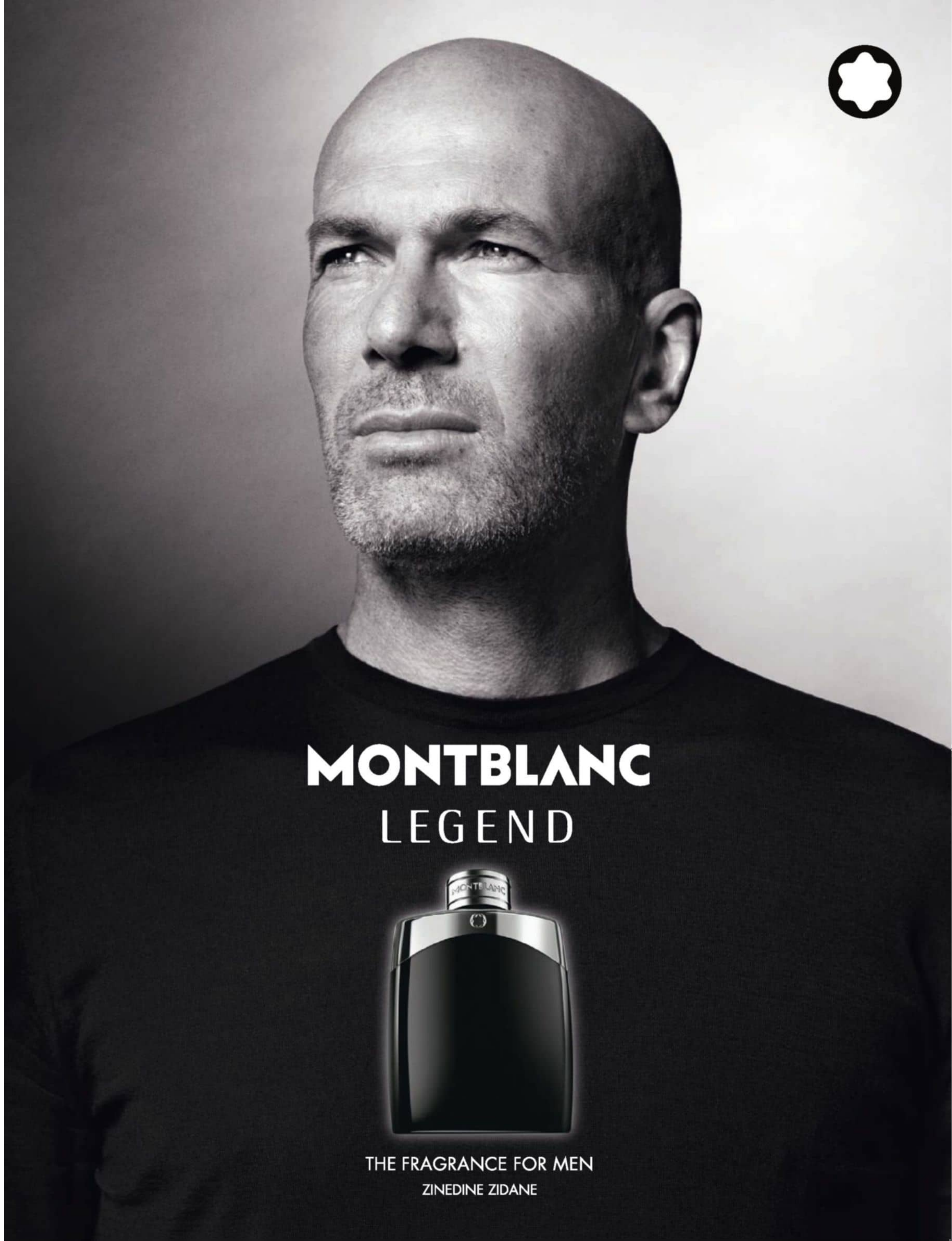

Growing up, when opening a new issue of a motoring magazine, I would excitedly skip to the pages featuring the latest and greatest, most technologically advanced high-performance and luxury cars of the time. For example, picking up this issue, my younger self would have undoubtedly paged to the Deep Drive of the i7 (p. 82). Little did that kid know he would test this stately saloon. Fast forward a few years and I am now seated in the i7's opulent, tech-laden cabin, setting off to an electrical *shoosh*.

As a motoring journalist, I have the good fortune to drive most new vehicles of various varieties. In recent times, it's the more analogue cars I've come to adore. Although I greatly respect what the German marque has achieved with the first-ever i7 – the electrified 7 Series is a technological masterclass and deserving of five stars – I find it refreshing to jump back into a vehicle that does not feature all the electronic luxuries. It's all nice-to-haves, yes, but they are not *really* necessary, for me, at least. No digital driver's display, no problem. Capacitive controls, no thanks. I prefer tactile analogue items. Having no electric adjustability, heating or ventilation for the seats is fine by me. I do not care for keyless entry or wireless charging . . . or a sunroof, for that matter.

That brings me to the Kadett GSi Superboss (p. 114). The old-school Opel hot hatch had none of the abovementioned modern-age items, which I did not mind. It was refreshing. It was purpose-built to be a no-frills fast hatchback. It was grin-inducing to sample this South African special. It was truly memorable. Although air conditioning and power-assisted steering would have been nice. And, I will admit, I enjoy the Apple CarPlay functionality in my Jimny.

So, it appears there are some luxuries I appreciate in a car but I still maintain that less is more (barring the safety aspect).

/Enjoy the issue

Marius

MB

mariusboonzaier

apexmag.co.za apexmag.co.za @apexmagza apexmagza

THE TEAM

**Publisher:** Vann van Staden **Editor:** Marius Boonzaier **Art director:** Bianca-Leigh Nagel **Lifestyle editor:** Lauren Zuidema

**Contributors:** Calvin Fisher, Hannes Oosthuizen, Kumbirai Mtshakazi, Mat Watson, Melinda Ferguson, Rebaneilwe Semakane, Vann van Staden
**Proofreader:** Margy Beves-Gibson

**Advertising and editorial queries:** 021 712 3842 / vann@apexmag.co.za

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# BRITISH BRUISER

"Grand is not enough," states Aston Martin. "[The DB12] is the world's first Super Tourer."

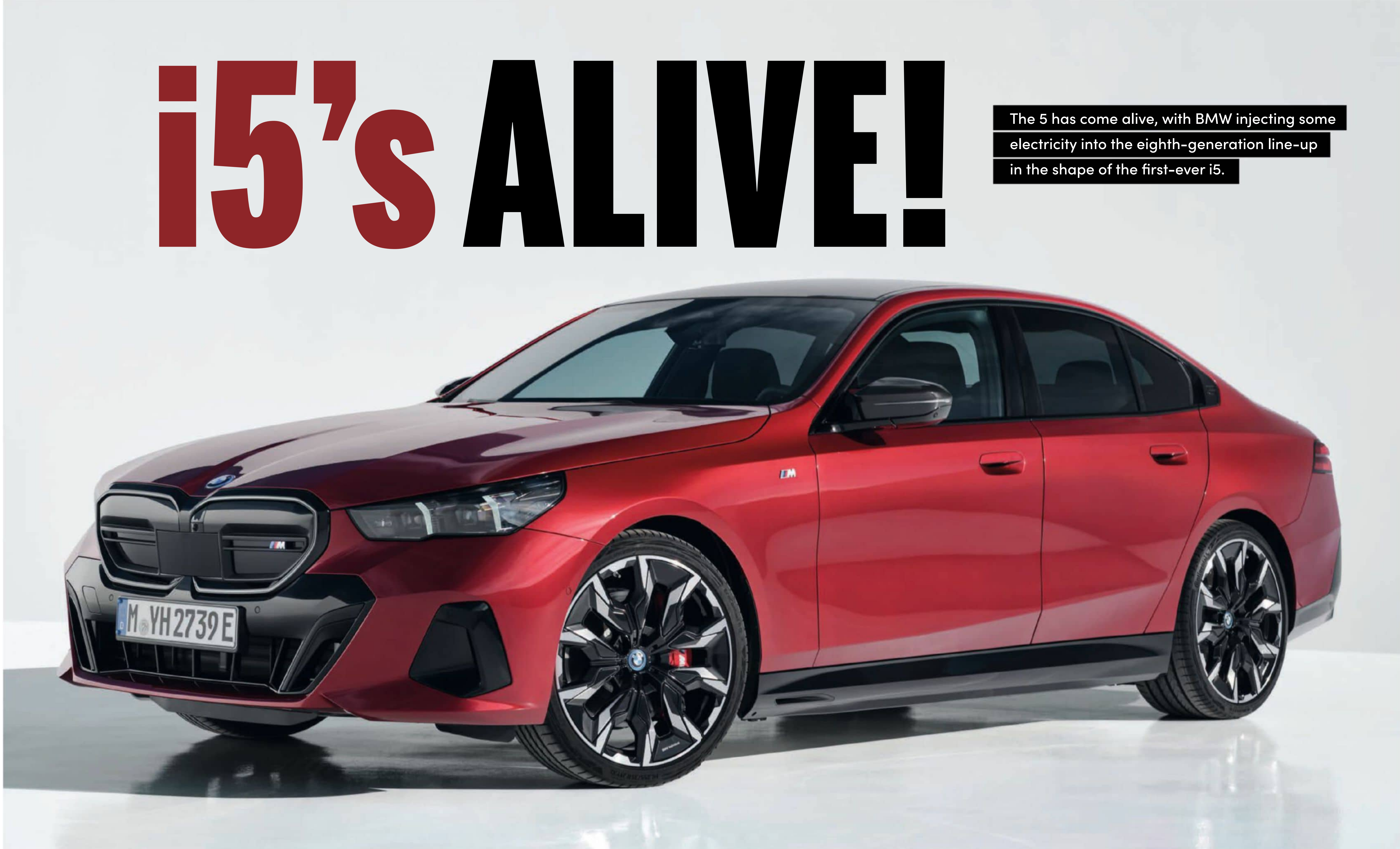
Heralding in a new era for the British luxury automaker, the DB12's elongated front end houses an Aston Martin-tuned, AMG-sourced 4.0-litre V8 engine. The twin-turbocharged unit produces a whopping 500 kW and 800 Nm of twisting force, the latter available as soon as the digital rev needle reaches the 2 750 r/min marker. Power is sent to the rear axle via an eight-speed automatic transmission, which, for the first time in a DB model, features an electronic rear differential, linked to the Super Tourer's ESC program.

Aston Martin claims the (1 685 kg; dry) DB12 dispatches the 0-100 km/h sprint in 3.6 seconds, before topping out at 325 km/h. Stopping power is provided by 400 mm front and 360 mm rear cast-iron brake discs. The braking set-up further features six-piston fore and four-piston aft callipers. Carbon-ceramic units are available as an option. The DB12's 21-inch alloy wheels are wrapped in 275/35 front and 325/30 rear Michelin Pilot Sport 5 S rubber.

According to Aston Martin, the interior indulges occupants with modern opulence. The cabin features Aston Martin's next-generation infotainment system. The "ultra-responsive" 10.25-inch central touchscreen incorporates wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto screen mirroring. However, physical controls have been retained to offer the "perfect" blend of digital and analogue operation. A new 3D mapping system is also present.

# i5's ALIVE!

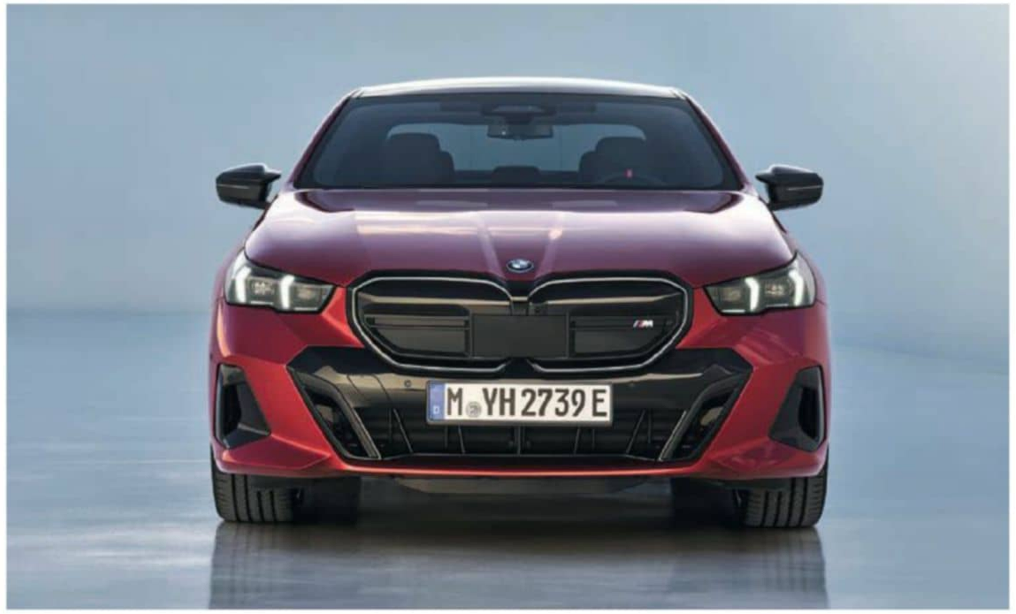
The 5 has come alive, with BMW injecting some electricity into the eighth-generation line-up in the shape of the first-ever i5.



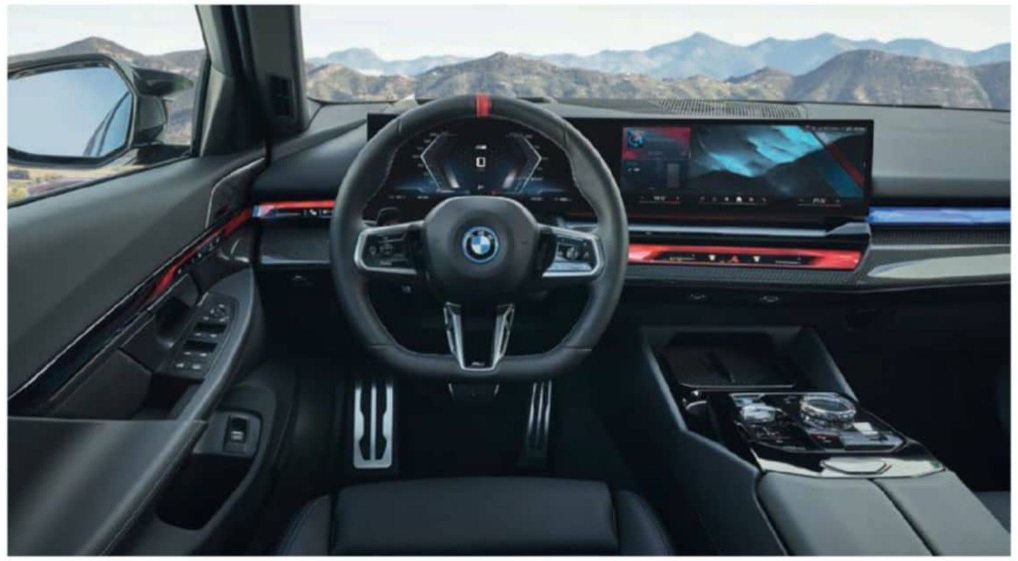
Spearheading the 5 Series line-up, the i5 M60 xDrive's twin electric motor arrangement produces 380 kW and 795 Nm of torque. However, the latter is lifted to 442 kW when activating My Mode Sport for a throw-you-into-the-backrest 3.8 seconds when the 2 305 kg i5 jumps off the line towards the 100 km/h marker. Maximum speed is electronically governed to 230 km/h.

The i5 M60 xDrive is equipped with a 81.2 kWh (net) lithium-ion battery pack, providing a claimed range of 455 to 516 km on the WLTP cycle. Power consumption is rated at 20.6 to 18.2 kWh/100 km.

Sporting a sportier yet elegant design, the new 5's reduced lines emphasise its presence. It measures 97 mm longer, 32 mm wider and 36 mm taller than its forebear.



The front end is characterised by a contemporary interpretation of the firm's signature grille, flanked by redesigned headlamp clusters and LED elements. BMW's Iconic Glow contour lighting is available for the kidneys. Viewed from the side, the 5 features powerfully designed surfaces. BMW maintains the flush door handles, black side skirts and '5' at the base of the C-pillar are eye-catchers. The rear end features 'flat' lamps, divided by a chrome strip.



Stepping inside, the interior features a significantly reduced number of analogue switchgear. Most functions are operated via the BMW Curved Display, comprising 12.3-inch digital instruments and a 14.9-inch touchscreen infotainment system incorporating BMW's Operating System 8.5.

## IN-CAR GAMING

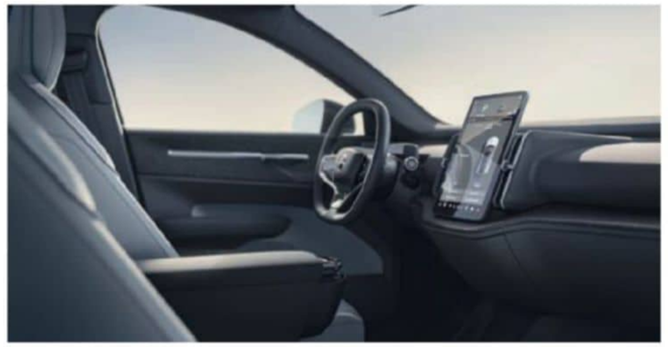
In partnership with gaming platform AirConsole, BMW has introduced a unique in-car gaming experience with the 5 Series, allowing the driver and passenger to play 'casual' games, using their smartphones as controllers, while the vehicle is stationary or to pass time while waiting for the vehicle to charge, in the case of the i5.

## OIL-BURNING BROTHER

Locally, the 520d will be launched alongside the i5. This model's 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder diesel engine, coupled with an eight-speed automatic transmission, produces 145 kW and 400 Nm, the latter available from a lowly 1 500 r/min. BMW claims the (1 775 kg) 520d completes the 0–100 km/h sprint in 7.3 seconds, before topping out at 233 km/h. The oil-burner sips a claimed 5.1 L/100 km.

# SMALL YET MIGHTY

The most compact, yet quickest-accelerating vehicle ever created by Volvo, the EX30 is "small yet mighty" according to the Swedish firm and it is coming to South Africa in early 2024.



The EX30's exterior design is quintessentially Volvo. The body surfaces are clean. The closed shield is flanked by a digital rendition of Volvo's Thor's Hammer headlamps. At the back, there are C-shaped tail- and vertical lamps. The EX30 measures 4 233 mm in length, 1 836 mm in width, 1 555 mm in height, and 2 650 mm between the fore and aft axles.

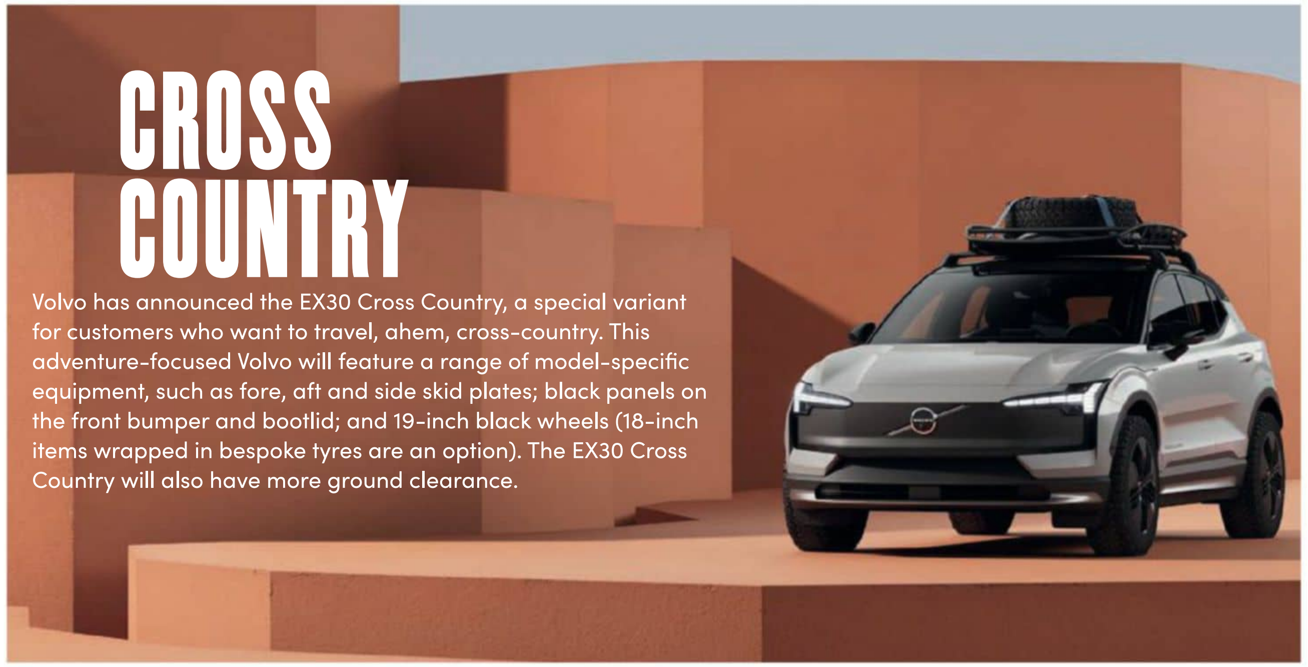
Like the exterior, the cabin is contemporary. Minimalistic. It is fitted with a single touchscreen, sited in the centre of the dashboard. Key driving information is displayed at the top of the Android-powered, 12.3-inch item, while the remaining functions, such as media, is accessible below. The system is coupled with a first-of-its-kind audio-system soundbar. The EX30's interior features several recycled trim elements. A host of safety items is also present (it is a Volvo, after all).

Single Motor, rear-wheel-drive and Twin Motor, all-wheel-drive models are available. The former produces 200 kW/343 Nm and can be had with the standard, 54 kWh lithium-ion phosphate battery pack, allowing for an electric range of 344 km, or 69 kWh pack, increasing range to 480 km. The standard and Extended range models have claimed 0-100 km/h sprint times of 5.7 and 5.3 seconds, respectively.

The Twin Motor, all-wheel-drive variant boasts 315 kW/543 Nm for a claimed 0-100 km/h sprint time of 3.4 seconds, making it the quickest-accelerating Volvo. This model has a claimed electric range of 460 km.

## CROSS COUNTRY

Volvo has announced the EX30 Cross Country, a special variant for customers who want to travel, ahem, cross-country. This adventure-focused Volvo will feature a range of model-specific equipment, such as fore, aft and side skid plates; black panels on the front bumper and bootlid; and 19-inch black wheels (18-inch items wrapped in bespoke tyres are an option). The EX30 Cross Country will also have more ground clearance.



# Young blood

A breakthrough crossover for Lexus, the LBX, the Japanese automaker says, “Offers strong appeal to a younger audience.”

The LBX establishes Lexus’ new Resolute Look design identity. The front end features a deconstructed version of the firm’s signature ‘spindle grille’. The latter item has been unified in a single trapezoidal shape, positioned below a tapered aperture running beneath the edge of the bonnet. The latter is flanked by slim headlamp clusters. The rear end features the latest evoltion of Lexus’ L-shaped light bars. Wheel sizes include 17- and 18-inch options.

The first model based on Lexus’ GA-B small car global architecture, the LBX measures 4 190 mm bow to stern, 1 825 mm in width, and 1 545 mm in height. The wheelbase measures 2 580 mm. Lexus claims a kerb weight of 1 280 kg.

Stepping inside, the LBX’s cabin is upholstered in semi-aniline leather. Vegan-friendly trim is available. Depending on the derivative, the LBX is equipped with a head-up display and a 12.3-inch digital instrument cluster.

The Lexus Link Connect infotainment system is operated via a 9.8-inch touchscreen, replete with Apple CarPlay (wireless) and Android Auto, and cloud-based navigation. A Mark Levinson surround sound system relays tunes over 13 “optimally positioned” speakers. Fifty-colour ambient lighting is also present. The luggage capacity (for the front-wheel-drive derivatives) is a claimed 332 litres, with space for two 75-litre cases provided by a compartment below the folding tonneau cover.

The LBX employs Lexus’ new-generation, self-charging hybrid powertrain, coupled with an electronic continuously variable transmission (eCVT). The petrol-electric arrangement comprises a compact 1.5-litre three-cylinder engine and an electric motor, coupled with an NiMH battery. The system produces 100 kW and 185 Nm of torque.

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# Africa's Fastest A45

BOOST GENETICS TUNED
NEO 45 GP

Nicholas Neofitou's modified Mercedes-AMG A45 completes the ¼ mile faster than any other A45 on the African continent. He now aims for world domination...

Words: Vann van Staden winewheelsandwatches

In the world of performance cars, Mercedes-AMG has always been one of the manufacturers at the forefront, with the German marque's performance sedans and supercar-fast saloons, sports SUVs and hot hatchback, the A45. Of these, the previous generation model written about here has been made even hotter and, as a result, has become the fastest A45 on the African continent.

I met owner Nicholas Neofitou at a BMW car launch a few years ago. He was one of the nicest guys. Little did I know he was harbouring a speed addiction that led him to modify his A45. Otherwise known as Neo, the 24-year-old – who creates content for corporate companies as a daytime job – is a car enthusiast and automotive content creator and lives in Johannesburg.

So how exactly did this kid from the City of Gold take his Mercedes-AMG A45, which pushed out 265 kW and 450 Nm of torque off the factory floor, and turn it into a hyper hatch that kicks out a whopping 422 kW and 763 Nm?

**Vann: You own the fastest A45 in Africa. How did that happen?**

**Neo:** It didn't just happen by chance; this car had been under continuous R&D for five years. The platform is tricky to modify, and not many companies could tune these cars properly until I met Wesley from Boost Genetics. He has the best knowledge on this platform and knows how to unleash its potential. Since I met him, we have spent time testing and changing tunes to get the most out of the car and, to be honest, we can still do more, but right now, we are both confident this is a world-record A45.

**V: Without revealing all your secrets, what's your car packing right now?**

**N:** Obviously, a car cannot be as fast as it is without proper modifications, so here is a little list of some key and supporting modifications that made it the beast it is. When I began this journey, it started small, like we all would with a plug-and-play tuning box and a downpipe. However, it did not stay on the car for too long because, as petrolheads know, it is never enough power. I went all out after that and installed two key modifications, which were forged pistons and rods and a bolt-on hybrid turbo, as well as the supporting modifications for that, like a charge cooler, intercooler, intake, full exhaust and methanol.

**V: Any plans on going for the fastest in the world?**

**N:** Of course, I hope Wesley and I will claim the fastest in the world this year once we get the car down to the coast. We are currently running 10.91 seconds at 1 600 m above sea level, and we think the car will perform a lot better at the coast, which should be enough with the current set-up to claim that world record. The world record right now is 10.76 seconds to complete a 1/4 mile.

**V: From where do you draw inspiration? Are there any local and international accounts you follow that excite you?**

**N:** I haven't really drawn any inspiration from anyone but I have rather grown a passion for anything and everything automotive. This certainly came from my father, who has always been a petrolhead and definitely passed it on to me. These days, we have so many creators on social media producing some insane content that I look up to.

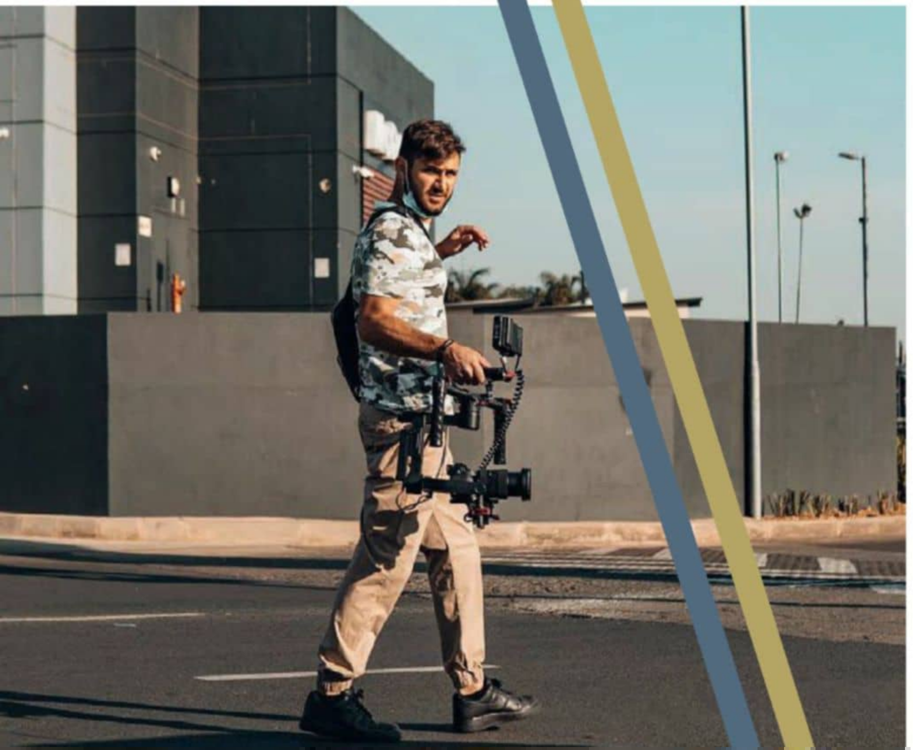
**V: You are incredibly talented behind the lens. Is that your main gig?**

**N:** Yes. Currently, videography and content creation is my main source of income. I thoroughly enjoy creating content and still have so much to learn about it.

**V: Other than your super-fast A45 and videography and photography, what are your other passions?**

**N:** Other than my A45, I have started flying drones, which I really enjoy. I also host car events under the name SA Torque, and have been doing that for about eight years.

Neo is making his way to the top. After our chat, he left me with this: "I've yet to be where I want to be with my content, but I hope to inspire others and make them feel like life is always worth living, even on our darkest days. That is my goal, and I will achieve it." ▲



You can follow Neo on Instagram at @neocinematics and @sa_torque

LAUNCH PAD
S MB 3033E

**Mercedes-Benz GLC 300d 4Matic 9G-tronic**

Words: Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier

# Success story

Mercedes continues its GLC success story with the second chapter of its global best-seller.

Many words have been written about the market's ever-increasing move towards crossovers and SUVs. But allow me to add a few more …

Follow the money, as the catchphrase goes – though, here, not referring to any government corruption – and you will find the crossover/SUV segment is where consumers are spending their hard-earned money. Case in point: the GLC has surpassed the C-Class as Mercedes-Benz's global best-seller, with 2.6 million people putting pen to paper for the Three-pointed Star brand's premium-midsize SUV since its introduction in 2016. It is an SUV success story, which Benz aims to continue with in the second chapter, titled X254.

The local line-up currently comprises three variants: the 200d, 300d and 300. A plug-in hybrid derivative will not be making its way to our shores. Instead, Mercedes-Benz SA remains fully focused on its electric-vehicle offensive. At the launch, we acquainted ourselves with the 300d, currently the protagonist in the local GLC line-up, until the AMG models arrive, that is. Equipped with the optional AMG Line exterior package (Avantgarde spec is standard), the press unit cut a handsome figure.

Sited behind the star-studded grille, the 300d's 2.0-litre, four-cylinder turbo-diesel churns out 198 kW and 550 Nm, sent to Merc's 4Matic system via a smooth-shifting, nine-speed automatic transmission. The oil-burner incorporates 48 V mild-hybrid tech, providing a 17 kW/200 Nm boost for short durations.

The engine felt remarkably refined, with only a hint of noise permeating the well-insulated cabin during spirited overtaking, which was a cinch, thanks to the additional twisting force. The GLC favours comfort, as a family SUV should. Bar some bumps, the overall ride quality felt supple (for enhanced comfort, a package comprising Merc's AIRMATIC set-up and rear-axle steering is available as an option). However, with AMG Line specification comes sports suspension, which lent the GLC some added dynamism during cornering.

Ample feedback was relayed to the palms via the pleasingly thin-rimmed, Nappa leather-trimmed tiller. As we have previously reported, we maintain that analogue buttons are more user-friendly than the capacitive items found on our press car's steering wheel.

The 11.9-inch infotainment system was, however, intuitive. A neat feature, the climate menu remains on the touch-enabled screen, allowing for effortless operation.

Several functions can be operated via voice control, allowing the driver to keep their eyes on the road. The 'Hey Mercedes' system is arguably the most sophisticated we have experienced in a vehicle. For example, when asked to adjust the temperature, it detected where the command is coming from (the front passenger, in this case) and individually adjusted the climate to their preferred setting.

In addition, our press unit was specified with MBUX augmented-reality navigation, which displays the directions (via blue arrows on the crisp portrait-orientated screen) as if it appears on the road ahead. However, whereas this set-up first seemed novel, we came to prefer the 2D line displayed most of the time.

The cabin is spacious, offering oodles of head- and legroom for the front and rear occupants. Mercedes claims a boot capacity of 620 litres, which can be increased to 1 640 litres when folding down the rear backrest. **Λ**

**AT A GLANCE**

The second-generation GLC builds on Mercedes' premium midsize-SUV success story, globally and locally, where the latest iteration could surpass C-Class sales. It is a commendable package. Priced at R200 000 less, we would argue the 220d 4Matic is the model of choice.

**Price:** R1 410 194 **Engine:** 2.0 L, 4-cyl, turbodiesel **Transmission:** 9-spd AT **Driven wheels:** 4 **Power:** 198 kW @ 4 200 r/min **Torque:** 550 Nm @ 1 800 r/min **0-100 km/h:** 6.3 seconds **Top speed:** 243 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 5.5 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 147 g/km

**Volvo C40 T8 Recharge AWD Ultimate**

Words: Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier

# Swede dreams

The C40 Recharge encapsulates well-being, offering a relaxing driving experience, while its acceleration will leave you beaming.

---

I adore the minimalism of Scandinavian design. For example, among many other items in my apartment, the desk I sit at is of this design. It is 'clean'... timeless even.

The latter can also be said of Volvo's modern design language. It's timeless. There are no unnecessary lines. It is sleek.

The C40 Recharge's styling remains true to its maker's contemporary design language. Whereas the roof of, for example, the XC40 has been drawn in a seemingly ruler-straight line, for the C40 Recharge, the Gothenburg-based brand have placed a curved item – the so-called French Curve often used in fashion design – on the sheet before completing the roofline. The result is fashionable bodywork. There is, however, a drawback to the sloping roofline. The tapered rear window restricts outward visibility.

Inside, most functions, including the dual-zone climate control system and seat heating, are operated via a Google Automotive infotainment system, incorporating Android Auto/ Apple CarPlay and several apps, such as Google Maps, which can be operated via

**AT A GLANCE**

Currently, I cannot think of another EV I'd want to live with. This is a subjective take, I know, but the C40 Recharge suits my lifestyle. Objectively, it is one of the most relaxing vehicles in SA to drive. It feels remarkably refined, with its well-appointed interior, wrapped in sleek bodywork, giving a sense of well-being. Add to that swift acceleration, and it will leave you beaming.

**Price:** R1 285 000 **Battery capacity:** 78 kWh **Powertrain:** twin electric motors **Transmission:** 1-spd AT **Driven wheels:** 4 **Power:** 300 kW **Torque:** 660 Nm **0-100 km/h:** 4.7 seconds **Top speed:** 180 km/h **Energy consumption:** 19.8 kWh/100km **Electric range**: 444 km

voice control. "Hey Google, open Spotify" to 'Enjoy the Silence' by Depeche Mode via the sublime, 13-speaker Harman/Kardon sound system, or you can sit back, relax, and enjoy the silence provided by the electric powertrain.

No wind noise was evident throughout the drive. The only sounds permeating the cabin were the pitter-patter of rain drops falling on the windshield and panoramic sunroof and, on unkempt surfaces, a hint of tyre noise. However, the suspension soaked up the imperfections, including those on a muddy-ish gravel road leading towards our destination. Traversing the latter was done with extreme caution, while the crisp 9.0-inch touch-enabled screen displayed a birds-eye view of the Volvo as we went along.

Although slight body lean was present, the all-wheel-drive set-up inspired confidence on winding roads and, once a straight piece of tarmac presented itself, the C40 Recharge accelerated to the horizon at a staggering pace.

Arriving at Ludus Magnus, an off-the-grid boutique hotel in Franschhoek, we pressed 'P' on the centre console. There is no start/stop button. The C40 Recharge is switched off by doing the latter and switched on by shifting the transmission lever to 'D' or 'R'.

**Toyota Urban Cruiser 1.5 XR**

Words: Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier

# Stunning sequel

Boasting higher production value, is the second instalment of the Urban Cruiser better than the first?

It's seldom that the sequel to a much-loved movie is as as good as the first. However, in the automotive world, it's often the opposite. The second instalment of Toyota's entry-level SUV has made its local premiere, and, like its forebear, it should be a box-office hit. Roll the film …

A joint production between Toyota and Suzuki, the new Urban Cruiser, along with the Grand Vitara, is now produced in the former automaker's Indian studio. Although shot on the same set and sharing the same fundamental script, the Toyota adaptation takes its own exterior design direction.

The new Urban Cruiser (sampled here in top-tier XR guise) is a more cinematic – dressed in Jet Blue body hue, our launch unit cut a striking figure – and larger production than the first. The length has increased by 370 mm, while the wheelbase has been stretched by 100 mm, resulting in a more capacious cabin.

All models ship with 7.0-inch touchscreen infotainment, replete with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, automatic air conditioning and a reverse-view camera system, supplemented by rear park distance sensors. The XR upgrades to a quartet of speakers.

Standard safety items include ABS with EBD, hill-assist control and vehicle stability control. The range-topping model further features six airbags. Cruise control is also present.

A welcome addition, the multifunction steering wheel is adjustable for rake and reach, which made it a cinch to tune in our preferred driving position. We initially sampled the five-speed manual variant, arguably the model of choice. Thanks to the slick-shifting manual's additional gear (the automatic 'box has four cogs), the revs could be kept steadier. As a result, average fuel consumption improved (it is worth noting, Toyota claims the manual and auto model sips 6.1 L/100 km).

Whereas the manual felt more adept to the open road, the self-shifter was appreciated in traffic. We would have liked an additional gear, though. It's best to sample both transmission options before putting pen to paper.

Further improvements have been made to the overall ride quality. The suspension felt supple on stretches of tarmac and owing to the increase in ground clearance (from 195 to 210 mm), the Urban Cruiser fared well on gravel.

**AT A GLANCE**

With the new Urban Cruiser, Toyota has followed the same plot as it did with the first. However, for the second instalment, the production value is higher, making it even more appealing. It is pricier, yes, but it makes sense considering what the new model offers. As a result, it should trump its forebear in ticket sales.

**Price:** R347 400 (MT) | R369 900 (AT) **Engine:** 1.5 L, 4-cyl, petrol **Transmission:** 5-spd MT | 4-spd AT **Driven wheels:** F **Power:** 77 kW @ 6 000 r/min **Torque:** 138 Nm @ 4 400 r/min **0-100 km/h:** n/a **Top speed:** 170 (MT) | 165 km (AT) **Fuel consumption:** 6.1 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 146 (MT) | 144 g/km (AT)

**GWM Tank 300**

Words: Kumbirai Mtshakazi IamKumbi

# Shells set & 'on the way'

The SA-bound Tank 300 has its shells set on the best of the best in the local 4x4 SUV segment. But will it pierce their armour? We drive it in Australia.

The GWM brand has dominated SA of late, mainly its increasingly popular Haval SUVs. Yet something was missing from the company's local artillery: a true off-roader that can battle the best of the best in the 4x4 SUV segment. Fortunately, we need not wait much longer because the Tank 300 is – as Shia Labeouf's character in *Fury* yells before firing a tank shell – on the way. We flew to Australia to drive it…

Regarding the Tank 300's exterior design, there is no mistaking it for anything else on our roads as soon as it arrives on local shores. The bold bodywork gives it a rugged appearance that will appeal to many.

Several luxurious touches, such as the Nappa leather seats, made an impression when stepping inside the cabin. In addition, the crisp dual-screen infotainment system appeared extremely sleek in person. Several USB ports, 12 V plugs and storage compartments are present. Thanks to the boxy bodywork, the interior space was generous.

An electrified 2.0-litre turbo-four producing 258 kW and 615 Nm drives all four of the Tank 300's wheels through a nine-speed automatic transmission. A low-range transfer case and front and rear differential locks are present. There are nine selectable drive modes, including Mud, Sand, Normal, Sport and Eco.

We sampled the Tank 300 on a short off-road course, where it proved itself. It handled steep climbs and descents (the approach and departure angles are 33 and 34 degrees), rock crawling and water wading with aplomb. Thanks to the light steering, it was a cinch to manoeuvre around the Australian Automotive Centre off-road terrain. And, when the going got tough, a detailed video feed displaying what was happening above or below the vehicle came in handy. On the safety side, the Tank 300 received a five-star ANCAP safety rating.

**AT A GLANCE**

The Tank 300 proved its mettle off the beaten track. However, don't let its rugged persona fool you; the interior boasts a premium-feeling finish and an array of standard convenience and safety features. The powertrain is also sufficiently punchy. Overall, the Tank 300 proves to be another convincing product that GWM will be bringing to our market. Pricing will significantly affect how South Africans will receive it. But, if GWM SA gets the asking price right, the local arm of the Chinese manufacturer arguably has another hit on its hands.

**Price:** TBC **Engine:** 2.0 L, 4-cyl, turbopetrol hybrid **Transmission:** 9-spd AT **Driven wheels:** 4 **Power:** 258 kW **Torque:** 615 Nm **0-100 km/h:** n/a **Top speed:** n/a **Fuel consumption:** n/a **CO$_2$:** n/a

**Fiat 500X 1.4T Sport**

Words: Vann van Staden winewheelsandwatches

# Matters of the heart

The 500X draws on the heartstrings; then the mind comes into play.

The Fiat 500 (tested in issue 04) has always made me smile, with its retro styling – inspired by the original model's design – making it a visually appealing city car. Yet, it is not without its cons, the most significant of which is its lack of oomph and packing space. Indeed, it's a car you buy with your heart. With the 500X, the Italian marque has supersized the compact model. And, much like its smaller sibling from which it takes its design cues, the crossover has something rather magnetic about it. Nipped and tucked, the facelifted model has even more magnetism. Driven here in Sport guise, the Sport EST – my favourite in the three-strong local line-up – ships with an electrically operated soft-top. Some cons remain but it was the welcome updates that initially drew me in; so let's start with the pros.

The upsized 500's head- and taillamps feature LED tech, with the former incorporating LED daytime-running lights. In addition, the front fog lamps are also of the LED variety. The 19-inch alloy wheels fitted to the Sport and chrome-trimmed exhaust tips add to its sporty styling.

The interior also features some sporty elements, most noticeably the 'techno' leather and Alcantara trim used for the multifunction steering wheel and atop the instrument binnacle housing the legible, analogue speedo- and tachometer and digital display sited betwixt. A host of convenience and safety features are included. The infotainment system felt more intuitive than before. However, measuring 7.0 inches, the touch-enabled display looks out of place in a car in this price range. And here's where I'll kick off with the cons…

The 500X's luggage capacity felt surprisingly small. Of course, it is more capacious than the 500, but compared to the Peugeot 2008, the Fiat's boot space (at 245 litres) is 189 litres less. The second gripe we had was its highway-driving dynamics. The 103 kW/230 Nm four-pot lacked a little zip. It's much more suited to in-town driving. I recorded a fuel consumption figure of 6.2 L/100 km on the launch.

**AT A GLANCE**

The supersized 500 drew on my heartstrings with its characterful curvature. However, I could not quite get the cons out of my mind. Like its city-hatch sibling, buying the 500X is a matter of the heart.

**Price:** R560 900 **Engine:** 1.4 L, 4-cyl, turbopetrol **Transmission:** 6-spd AT **Driven wheels:** F **Power:** 103 kW @ 5 000 r/min **Torque:** 230 Nm @ 2 500 r/min **0-100 km/h:** 9.8 seconds **Top speed:** 190 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 5.7 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 133 g/km

# PEOPLE PLEASER

For marketing consultant Caroline van Schalkwyk, one of the best things about owning an original VW Beetle is the discernible moments of joy that the sight of her car brings to those around her.

WORDS & PHOTOS: KATE FIFE

When it comes to capturing photographs of a car at one of Cape Town's many lovely coastal viewing areas, I'm usually, well, in the way. From tourists bustling in the background of my carefully composed frame to locals grumbling about my angled parking or, indeed, runners and cyclists panicking that a manoeuvre to avoid my tripod might reflect on their respective Strava recording. Being a car photographer in this city is no easy graft.

On this day, though, my shoot of a beautifully finished, 57-year-old Bahama Blue Volkswagen Beetle caused a stir for a different reason. Indeed, every person that happened upon our location felt compelled to fondly recall a time they had spent with VW's original people's car.

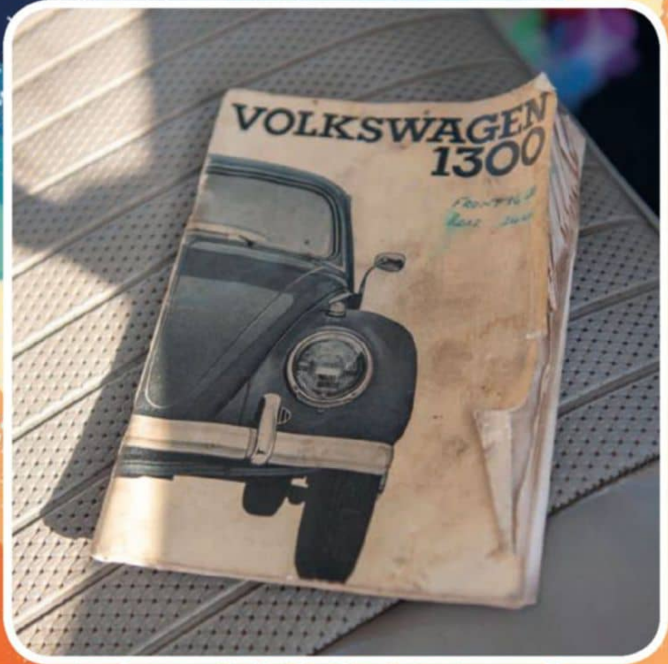
Alongside my own vague recollection of my parents' first bug-shaped set of wheels when they arrived in South Africa in 1976, the clear winner for the morning was an elderly German gentleman who delightfully announced that his parents had owned one of the first examples of the Beetle … in 1948!

Capetonian Caroline van Schalkwyk's love affair with the 'Bug' began the moment she took delivery of her first car, a green 1975 example that she christened Kermit. While Kermit would ultimately not survive an untimely encounter with a tree trunk in one of Cape Town's leafier suburbs, Caroline admits she has been on the lookout for a suitable replacement ever since.

She also concedes that it was this enthusiasm, combined with her then-limited knowledge of the things to look out for when buying a pre-loved Beetle that led her to purchase a "nice-looking" example in 2011 from a dealership in Mossel Bay. Once the vehicle arrived in Cape Town via truck, various under-the-skin issues with the car began to surface. The silver lining to this experience was that it collimated with an introduction to Jurgen Kirsch, a Strand-based VW specialist who began his working career at Wolfsburg in Germany, the home of VW.

While Kirsch set about repairing the Mossel Bay-sourced car, his recently restored '66 Beetle caught Caroline's eye. Dubbed 'Volatjie', it is this car you see in these images.

1966 was a significant year for the Beetle, not least as VW would produce both its eleventh- and twelfth-millionth example within this 24-month period. With a view to keeping pace (literally) with its rivals in the US market, VW would grant the Bug a welcome dose of additional performance. Where the '75 car featured a 40 hp (30 kW) 1 200 cc motor, for the '66 model year, this engine was fettled to 1 285 cc, as denoted by the '1300' badge on its teardrop-shaped boot lid. Together with an updated carburettor, the 758 kg German coupé delivered a whopping 10 hp more than before (now 37 kW). Significantly, the car's claimed top speed also increased to 120 km/h.


VOLKSWAGEN
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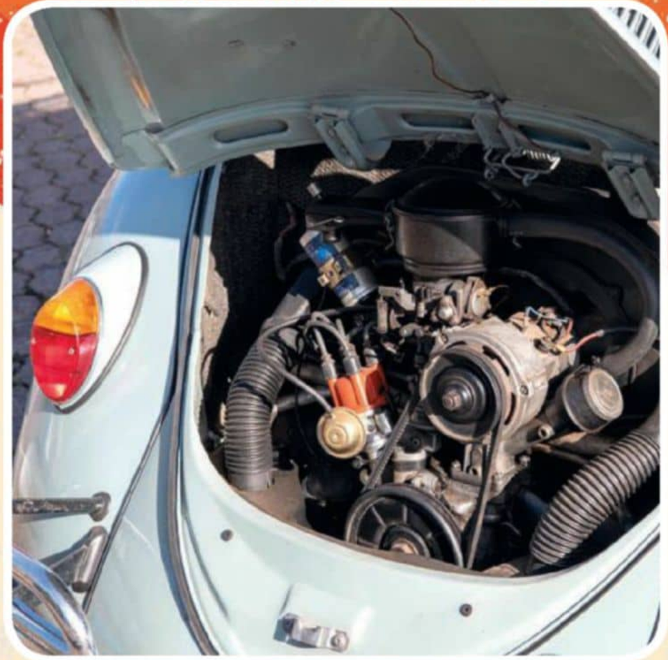

Capetonian Caroline van Schalkwyk's love affair with the 'Bug' began the moment she took delivery of her first car, a green 1975 example that she christened Kermit.

CFM
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Like many of the cars from this era, Caroline's VW has been converted to a 12 V electrical system, from its original 6 V set-up. While the '66 model's pronounced chrome bumpers and headlamp unit eyelids add character, the Namibia-sourced chrome and timber roof rails fitted to her car hint at a cheeky sense of adventure. A glance inside the cabin reveals period-correct luggage, complete with books and memorabilia that highlight Volatjie's journey to date. This includes the retrofit installation of latches with which to pop open the rear glass panels, as well as an armrest sited between the front seats.

Caroline also runs the Aircooled Helderberg and Overberg group page on Facebook, which currently hosts more than 300 members. For owners and enthusiasts alike, it's via these kinds of channels that even more fond memories are regularly shared.

Shoot completed and bystanders' stories exchanged, what struck me while chatting to Caroline over a coffee is that, while she grew up surrounded by the VW brand – including her mom's Golf Mk1 and father's Kombi – and is clearly very much in love with her classic Beetle, she no longer resonates with this German brand in its modern form. For cost or perhaps the absence of the same level of character that cars like the Beetle exude, it seems one of the biggest challenges currently facing VW is to once again create vehicles – electric or otherwise – that 'ordinary people' can get excited about. While the reborn Kombi (ID.Buzz) is certainly a step in the right direction, as recently announced, the brand is actively looking to its forthcoming, compact ID.2 package to kickstart a new chapter of storytelling. ▲

# Electric Avenue

Electricity was flying in Tommys Chop Shop when power couple Nicol and Farryl Purkiss kicked it back in Levi's latest threads.

PHOTOGRAPHER: TEGAN SMITH
MODELS: NICOL PURKISS, FARRYL PURKISS
MOTORBIKE FEATURED:
TALARIA STING FROM ACE SPORTS
STYLIST: ELIZABETH VAN VUUREN
WARDROBE: LEVI'S
LOCATION: TOMMYS CHOP SHOP

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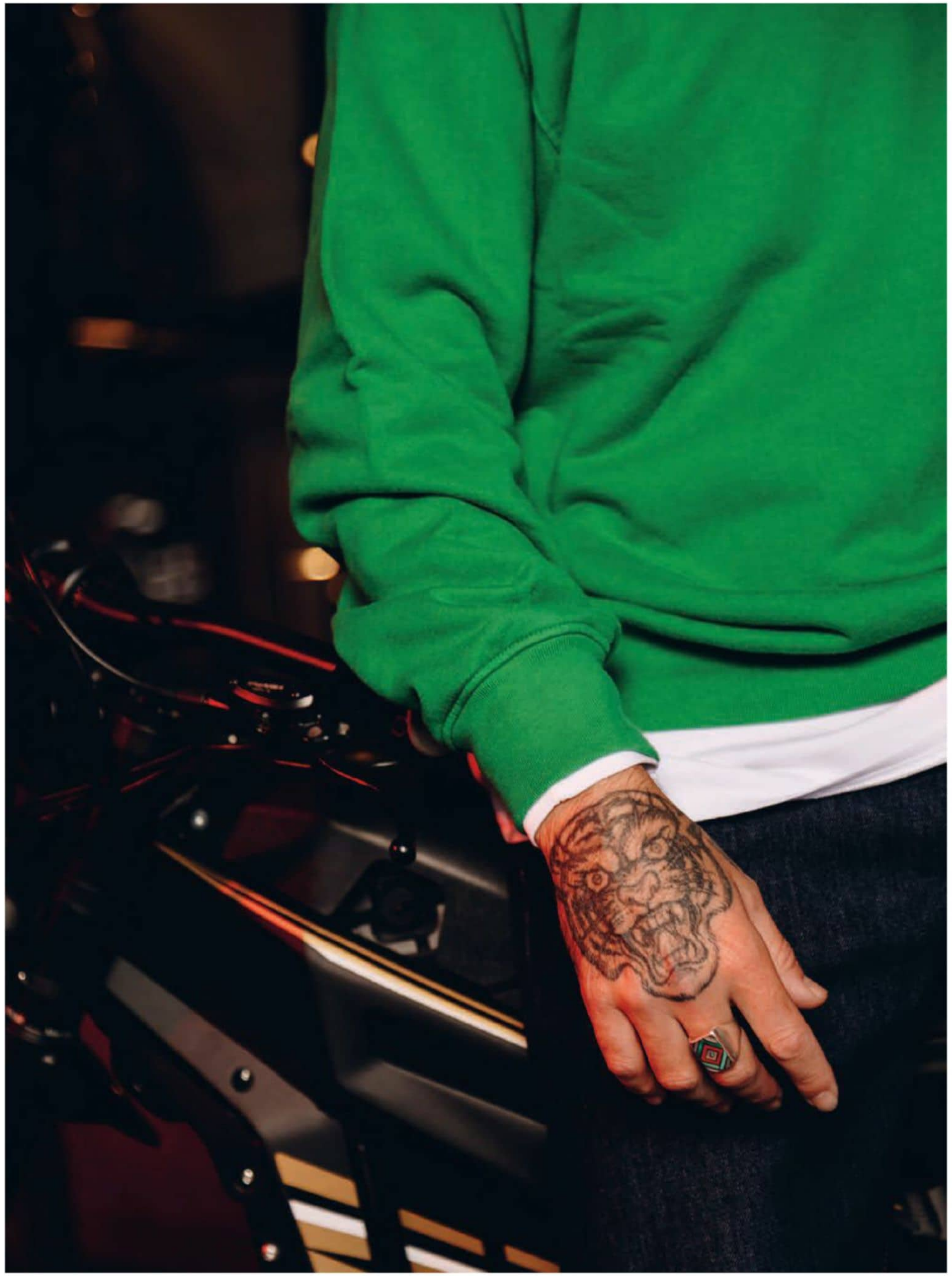


SLOW DOWN
levi's

# Is motoring journalism dead?

Veteran journo Hannes Oosthuizen answers an age-old question he is often asked…

**Words:** Hannes Oosthuizen HannesCars

The media world was very different when I started out at the beginning of the century. The print team worked separately to digital, which was still in its infancy. There was no social media. No videos to make. For two weeks of a month, I would write articles, and the other two weeks I would travel the world, drive cars, and read. Print ruled then, and advertising budgets kept a large number of editorial teams going.

Then everything changed. As the digital revolution gathered steam, carmakers suddenly had a variety of new platforms on which to spend their budgets, and traditional media had to adapt or die. The teams were merged, and those two weeks of 'downtime' disappeared. With so many platforms to service, yet dwindling advertising spend and declining circulation, many publications closed. Editorial teams became smaller, younger, and the workloads heavier.

That's the background to a question I'm often asked; "Is there a future in motoring journalism?"

As a start, I think any aspiring motoring 'journalist' needs to ask themselves a couple of questions first, and answer them honestly. What is it that is driving you to consider this career path (which will not make you rich)? Is it the perceived lifestyle? The access to cool cars? Or crafting content?

I can tell you the lifestyle is not nearly as glamorous as you may think. When I travelled to Belgium to drive the BMW iX5 prototype, it was, of course, very interesting, and I did travel Business Class, but I was in the air longer than I was on the ground, and all that I saw of Brussels was the airport.

Cool cars? Yeah, if you get into this industry and gain the carmakers' trust, there will be some nice cars, but the Porsches, Lamborghinis and Ferraris are very, very rare. Most of the time you will be creating content on cars normal people buy. Still interested? Good…

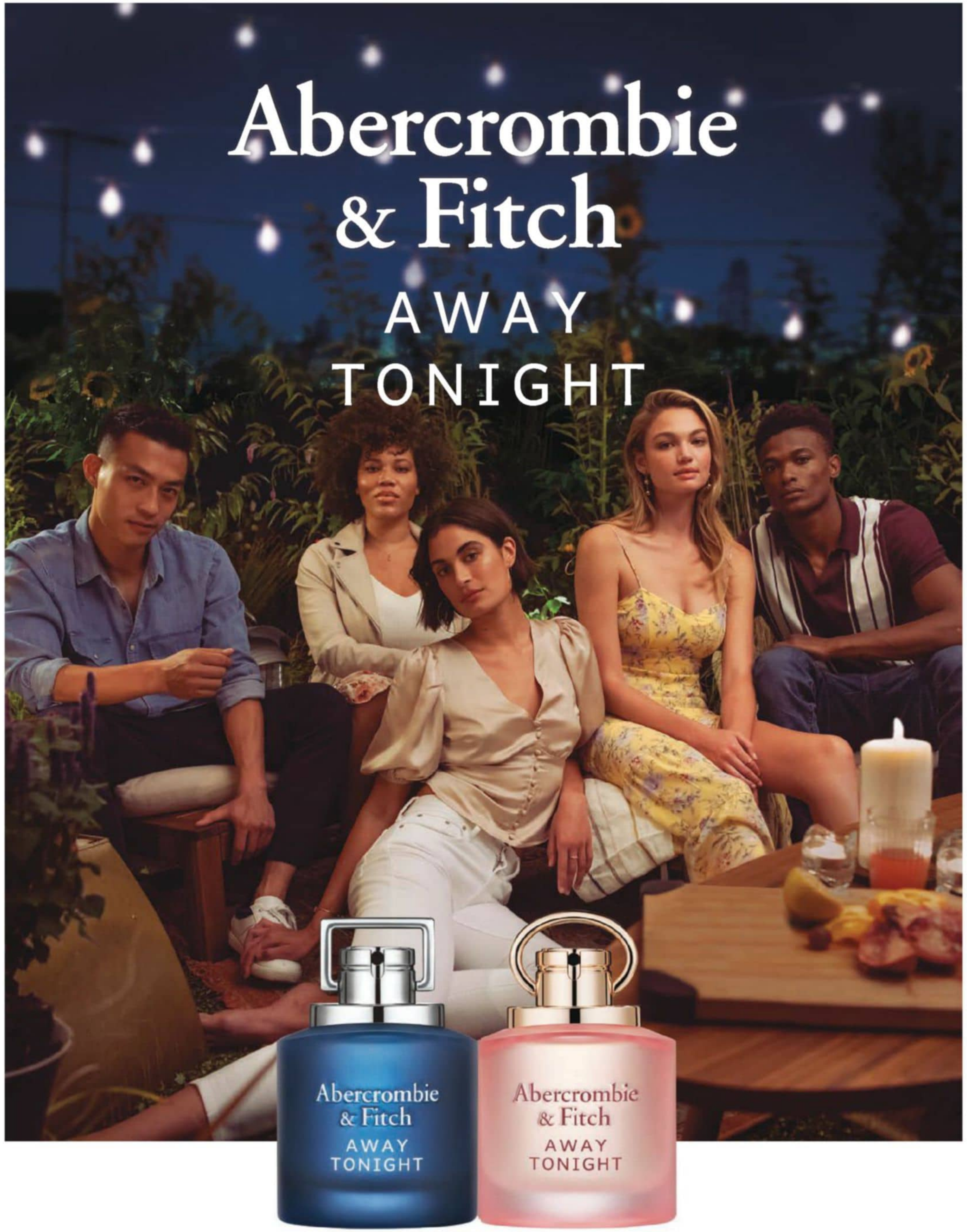
Here is what I believe. If you think there is a career as a permanently employed motoring journalist in South Africa, you are probably wrong. There are fewer than 10 such positions that I believe are relatively secure in this country. People do not read much anymore. Consumers spend their time online and research their buying decisions there. They use tools, not necessarily articles. Video is critical.

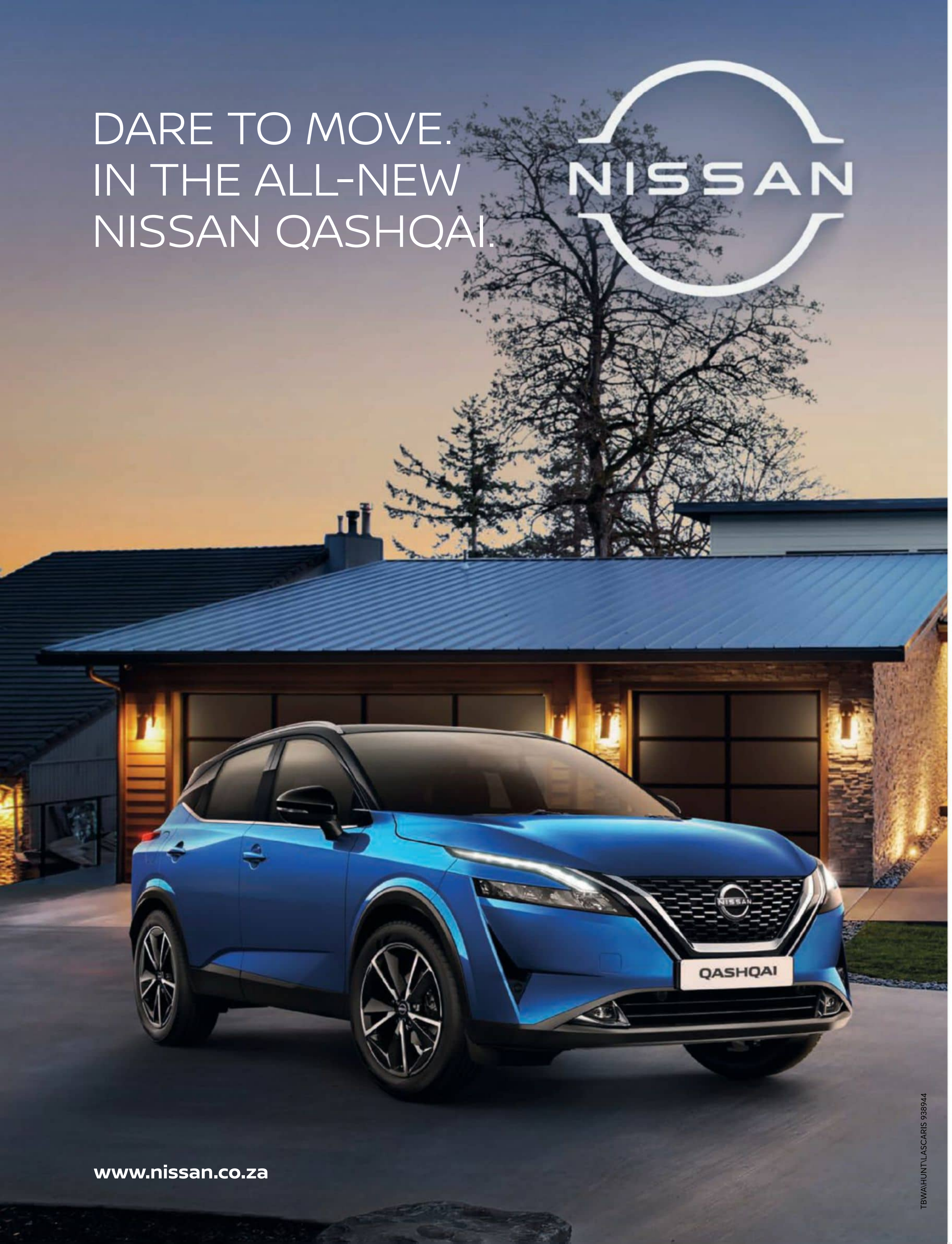
So, what should you do? Assuming you know a thing or two about cars, being a good writer will make you a good storyteller, whatever the medium is that you end up using. Do not skimp on that skill. Secondly, get comfortable in front *and* behind the camera. And the third (of many more) is that you should understand who your audience is, and what they want. Spend time deep-diving the analytics.

Old-school motoring journalism is pretty much dead, but there will always be a place for great motoring content producers. Good luck!

**HO** / **Hannes Oosthuizen**

Hannes spearheads Cars.co.za's content division and the company's SentiMETAL sub-brand. He is SA's longest-serving World Car Awards judge.





# Strides of success

Chinese automakers have made massive strides in SA since their reintroduction to local shores … and the upward sales trajectory continues

**Words:** Rebaneilwe Semakane _RebaS

With South Africans feeling the sharp pinch of the ever-fluctuating economy and the increase in new-car prices, the Chinese have come to the rescue with affordable and robust vehicles. Indeed, with their growing popularity, brands such as Haval and Chery have ranked commendably in the monthly sales charts. For a country as brand loyal as ours, it is refreshing to see a change in car-buying trends and the support South Africans have given these manufacturers.

Let's take Chery, a relatively new brand, for example. With its inception in only 1997, Chery tried its luck on local shores in 2008 with the quirky QQ and previous Tiggo models. The brand failed dismally owing to sub-par build quality and reliability, as it was fixated on making affordable cars more than anything. Fast forward to its return to the market in late 2021 and it has yielded nothing but fantastic results with products such as the Tiggo 4 Pro and Tiggo 7 Pro. In January 2023, with a sales figure of 1 327 units, Chery ranked higher than BMW, Mahindra and Mazda.

The same goes for Haval; with its increasingly popular Jolion and H6 models – of which we sampled the hybrid H6 in issue 07 –it fared even better than the abovementioned Chinese automaker. In the first month of this year, the company sold 1 565 units, a commendable achievement.

These brands' success can be attributed to a few factors: modern looks and premium-feeling and well-equipped interiors, all at a competitive price. In addition, it shipped these with extended warranties. The Chery Tiggo 4 Pro – tested in issue 05 – for example, comes with a 10-year/one million kilometre warranty (for the first owner). This shows the manufacturer has newfound confidence in its products. As a result, consumers can now get into a car that feels premium and boasts oodles of standard features once reserved for cars, which, priced at the higher end of the spectrum, were available only to high-income earners.

In all honesty, offering such products in this economic climate is commendable. Although these brands have made their way back into the market only recently, they have made impressive strides.

**RS** / **Rebaneilwe Semakane**

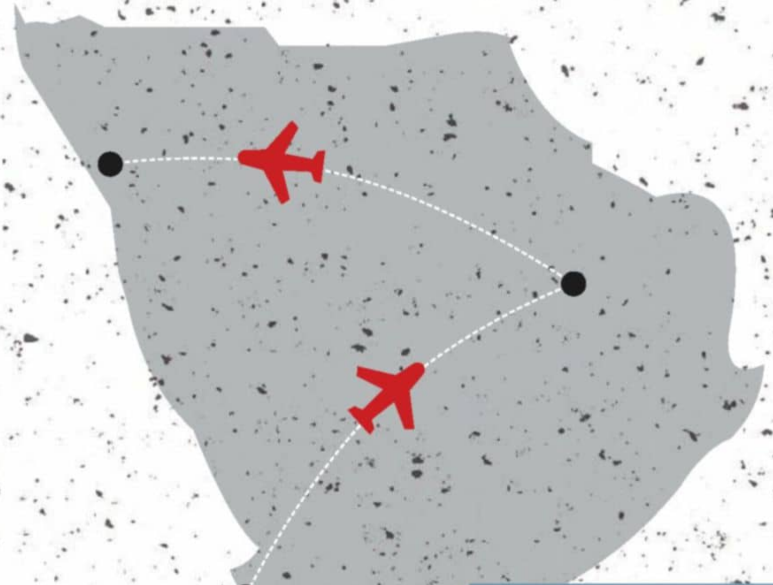
Rebaneilwe is a motoring journalist and content creator, and her career spans over three years, with a special interest in consumer-oriented reviews and market trends.

# KING OF THE DUNES

FORD
RAPTOR

A rally bakkie for the road, the new Ranger Raptor takes its place on the throne as king of the dunes in the Namibian desert.

Words: Vann van Staden ◎ winewheelsandwatches



Frankly, I'm not a 'let's go camping kinda girl'. So, when the invite arrived to spend three days in the Namibian desert to unleash the next-generation Ranger Raptor, I wasn't exactly elated at the thought of it. It was a catch-22, as I have always adored the Raptor. However, the prospect of driving it in its natural habit was one I could not refuse, so I dusted off my passport, packed my camping gear and headed to Namibia.

## DAY ONE

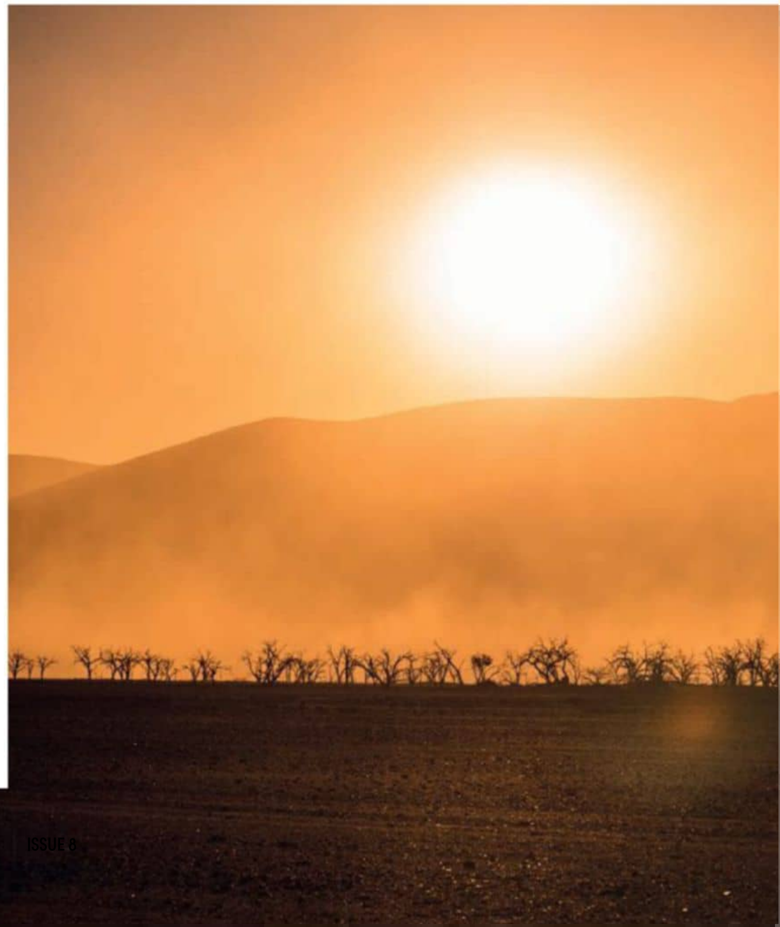
We set off on a red-eye flight from Cape Town International Airport and caught our connecting flight from OR Tambo International Airport. Next stop: Walvis Bay International Airport. This was my maiden trip to Namibia, and I was rather stoked. Exiting the airport, we strolled to the parking lot, where a fleet of Raptors awaited us.

We got handed a little care pack, were briefed, and were good to go. Our first adventure took us on a thrilling stretch of beach driving. This was a jol. Now and then, the sand gave way under you. The Raptor never skipped a beat.

After a little midday snack on the beach, we went to base camp. Upon arrival, we were met with some lekker refreshments and time to unwind before sunset. The sky in the Namibian desert was surreal.

FORD
RANGER
RAPTOR

THE SKY IN THE NAMIBIAN DESERT WAS SURREAL.



# DAY TWO

Waking up, it was amazing when zipping open the tent and seeing this spectacular sight: the clear blue skies and an outdoor shower powered by a Raptor parked next to it. After a somewhat interesting shower experience and filling our Stanley coffee cups, we started our first dune quest.

I have driven on the Atlantis dunes, but facing the Namibian dunes was a completely different story. They are petrifying! Gideo, our guide, checked in with us on the walkie-talkies, giving us instructions to change the terrain setting and engage the rear diff lock.

We were in a single-file convoy and took on the dunes one at a time. The bakkie in front of us climbed with the greatest of ease. Then it was our turn. My co-pilot mumbled something along the lines of, "It's better to redo it than to overdo it" (someone clearly paid attention during the briefing).

Before I was ready to take on this dune, Gideo radioed in to say we could either do Sand or Baja mode. All of a sudden, I forgot everything and just remembered someone saying Baja is best. Then I just went for it. It was a walk in the park. The Ranger Raptor was – to no surprise – impressively capable of scaling the dune.

> THE FOX SUSPENSION IS UNBEATABLE IN THIS TERRAIN.

Next up, rock crawling. I am not a fan. Even sitting in the comfort of the Raptor, I expected the worst. Here, 'break a leg' seemed more literal than metaphorical. But I had to play it cool as we set off, Rock mode engaged. It forged its own path. The Fox suspension is unbeatable in this terrain. Fear left my body, and I was happy. We came out victorious on the other side.

We headed back to camp. Our last night was bittersweet. I was happy to head home the next day to shower in a shower not powered by a V6 bakkie, but I was going to miss the reddish-orange sand of the Namibian desert and the 3.0-litre turbocharged V6 that kicks out 292 kW and 583 Nm.

# DAY THREE

The last day of our trip was smooth sailing as we took our time when heading back to the airport. Another highlight of the trip was our pitstop en route to the airport. We stopped at this little coffee shop where we met Lady: half fox, half dog, and 100 per cent cute!

The trip was a complete 360 for me. The bane of my existence turned into the object of my desire. I was ready to stay behind and continue the quest, traversing the dunes in the Raptor.

The new Ranger Raptor is savage. After spending quality time with it in Namibia, I won't cry too much about Ford ditching the much-loved diesel motor of the previous model (most will not; this is what everyone arguably wanted, what the pinnacle Ranger needed). Driving the Raptor in these conditions proved the folks at Ford have built a road-legal rally bakkie. ▲

## MUST-HAVE TRAVEL GEAR

**Survival Vehicle First Aid Kit | Cape Union Mart | R2 999**

**Jackery Explorer 250 Portable Power Station | R6 950**

**Inmarsat IsatPhone 2 (for rent and sale) | sat4rent.co.za | POR**

**Whiskey lowtops | Freedom of Movement | R1 895**

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08/ NEWS Aston Martin DB12 • BMW 5 Series • Volvo EX30 • Lexus LBX LAUNCH PAD Mercedes-Benz GLC • Volvo C40 Recharge • Toyota Urban Cruiser • GWM Tank 300 • Fiat 500X DEEP DRIVE BMW i7 • Range Rover Sport • Toyota RAV4 PHEV • Honda Civic Type R • Suzuki Grand Vitara FEATURE Fastest A45 AMG in Africa • People pleaser: owning a classic VW Beetle BIKE Indian Motorcycles Chief Dark Horse LIFESTYLE Electric Avenue • Sound on: Denon speakers • Riding shotgun with Jack Parow • CLASSICS The Boss: Opel Kadett GSi Superboss

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# Sound On

Words: Vann van Staden

Awaken your senses and take your music experience to new heights. Denon has been serving customers for over a century with high-quality audio equipment. We showcase three of their hi-tech speakers, letting you in on what you can expect to elevate your music experience.

These wireless speakers are designed to deliver crystal-clear sound that will make you feel like you're in the middle of a concert, all without the hassle of tangled cords or complicated setups. From deep bass to crisp highs, the Denon Home speakers are designed to bring music to life.

First up is the **Denon Home 150** wireless speaker, a powerful pocket rocket that brings the bass. This speaker is compatible with Airplay, Amazon Alexa and Bluetooth, making connecting to your favourite streaming services and devices easy. With a competitive retail price of R4 590, this speaker is a must-have for those who want to enjoy their music wirelessly.

Second in line is the mid-sized **Denon Home 250**, which offers excellent connectivity options for almost all platforms. Its sleek modern design makes it ideal for setting up as part of a full surround sound system or as a stand-alone piece. It is beautifully designed and will complement almost any décor style.

But wait, there's more! The **Denon Home 350** is the flagship speaker in this range, and it is easy to see why excitement peaks with this one. Featuring a modern, round design and attractive fabric wrapping that blends seamlessly into your living space, this speaker is sure to impress your guests. With its powerful sound capabilities and advanced features, the Denon Home 350 delivers a sound experience like no other.

Denon's high-quality audio products are built to perform and their wireless speaker range does just that. Whichever speaker you opt for in the range, you are guaranteed an immersive music experience that will awaken your senses and elevate your music game.

Denon Home 150

Denon Home 250

Denon Home 350

DEEP DRIVE

# BMW I7 XDRIVE60

Spearheading the new 7 Series line-up, the i7 is BMW's statement piece in the luxury EV segment.

**Words:** Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier

+ ride refinement; opulent and comfortable cabin; tech − divisive styling?

A statement piece, an eye-catching item that does not compete for attention, be it a piece of furniture in a lavishly decorated room, a luxury watch accompanied by an ensemble from Hugo Boss or a dazzling necklace highlighted by a tailor-made Gert-Johan Coetzee dress. In the automotive landscape, that's just what the BMW i7 is, a statement piece that demands attention.

To be fair, you cannot miss it; with its extensive, chrome-adorned kidney grille and the bodywork's pronounced proportions. The i7 measures a monolithic 5 391 mm bow to stern and 1 950 mm in width (2 192 mm if you include the side mirrors). Even at night, with the kidneys' contour lighting and the slim LED matrix headlamps, the i7 is unmissable. Say what you want about its design language, the i7 makes a statement, even more so when specified with the M Sport package or, if you're more daring, the optional (R197 000) two-tone exterior paintwork. To top it all, the automatic opening doors – at R24 700 – welcome you to an opulent cabin. They open via the key fob, at the touch of a button on the doorcard or the 14.9-inch infotainment display, or by voice command.

The solidly constructed and plush interior of the i7 is beautifully crafted and decorated. The attention to detail on the facia, door panels, seats and switchgear is exquisite. The cabin is exceptionally comfortable – whether in the driver's pew behind the two-spoke multifunction tiller or on the rear seats – especially when the Executive Lounge Seating has been specified. Even without this R36 100 option, there are oodles of head- and legroom for the aft passengers.

Rear-seat ventilation/heating (R14 000) and massage functionality (R19 700) are operated by touch-enabled displays in the door armrests just like the rear climate control system (the i7 has quad-zone climate). If you are planning on being chauffered, these options are well worth considering, as is BMW's (R78 000) rear-seat entertainment Professional with iDrive control package, which includes the Bavarian brand's 8K Theatre screen. This option was arguably the (statement) pièce de résistance in the test car's cabin. The crisp, 31.3-inch touchscreen – incorporating BMW's latest operating system – that folds out from the roof allows the passengers to watch movies and series on their favourite streaming services and download several apps. Audiophiles may want to consider the optional (R95 200) Bowers & Wilkins Diamond surround sound system. Adding ambience was BMW's (standard-fitment)

## DEEP DATA

**Price:** R2 825 000 **Battery capacity:** 101.7 kWh **Engine:** twin electric motor **Transmission:** 1-spd AT **Driven wheels:** A **Power:** 400 kW **Torque:** 745 Nm **0-100 km/h:** 4.7 seconds **Top speed:** 240 km/h **Electricity consumption:** **Range:** 591-625 km **$CO_2$:** 0 g/km **Length:** 5 391 mm **Height:** 1 544 mm **Width:** 1 950 mm **Wheelbase:** 3 215 mm **Weight:** 2 640 kg **Luggage capacity:** 500 L **Warranty:** 2 years/unlimited km (8 years/100 000 km for battery) **Maintenance plan:** 5 years/100 000 km

Sky Lounge panoramic sunroof. Even considering all these options, the i7 xDrive60 is generously equipped as standard.

However, if you thought rear-pew comfort and entertainment are only where the i7 excels, you are sorely mistaken. Behind the steering wheel, driving this luxury limousine, the emissions-free 7 was equally exemplary. The driver's seat was comfortable, and engaging the boost function (by pulling on the steering wheel-mounted paddle shifter) for a brief time provided an entertaining drive.

Much has been said about how electric vehicles all drive the same. Yet, this didn't seem to apply to BMW's battery-powered flagship, which is a noteworthy feather in its cap. For example, when launched in South Africa, we sampled the 740i alongside the i7. And, on a leisurely cruise, we could not feel a substantial difference in how they drive, bar the petrol-powered model's lighter steering and sometimes-heard six-cylinder and, when it came to pushing on, their performance.

The i7 xDrive60's twin-electric motor arrangement produces 400 kW and 745 Nm of torque (120 kW/205 Nm more than the 740i), sent to BMW's xDrive all-wheel-drive system via a single-speed automatic transmission. These figures allow the i7 to complete the 0–100 km/h sprint in a claimed 4.7 seconds, quite impressive for a car tipping the scales at 2.6 tonnes. The top speed is rated at 240 km/h.

But, back to the test. The ride quality was sublime. The i7's air-suspension configuration ironed out most creases in the road. The cabin was whisper-quiet. At some stages, it became so comfortable, we almost started daydreaming (possibly of being chauffered to a glamorous event … hopefully mistaken for the glitterati and not, heaven forbid, politicians). The handling was on the heavier side but, that said, the steering set-up made guiding the i7's prominent grille in the desired direction a cinch.

In addition, the i7's regenerative braking system worked a boon, with the set-up anticipating when the driver would apply the brakes and act accordingly to slow the vehicle. BMW claims a range of 591 km to 625 km when the 101.7 kWh battery is fully charged. While this is not as much as its Three-pointed Star rival's – the EQS 450+ – depending on how you drive, the i7 should be able to manage a range towards the higher figure.

## THE VERDICT

## 5/5

**Spearheading the seventh-generation 7 Series line-up, the i7 makes a statement. It is arguably the leader in the luxury saloon segment. It's a masterpiece of engineering and sheer opulence. Whether seated in the captain's chair behind the leather-trimmed tiller, piloting the electrified 7, or at the rear, being chauffeured about, the i7 provides ample comfort and entertainment. And, dare we say, if you're in the market for a car of this ilk, it is good value for money.**

i7
KW 63 RG GP

# RANGE ROVER SPORT D350 DYNAMIC HSE

Majoring in style and opulence, the new Range Rover Sport takes a step up from its forebear ... way up.

**Words:** Vann van Staden winewheelsandwatches

+ stylish design; plush interior; tech; comfort; handling − too expensive against its competitors?

Since its introduction, the Range Rover Sport has become a staple in Land Rover's luxury-SUV portfolio. It walks a fine line between a lavish SUV with comfortable on-road driving dynamics and commendable off-road capability (though we would argue the third generation will seldom, if ever, get its tyres dirty on roads rougher than stretches of gravel). For the latest iteration, the British marque has built on all the aspects that made its forebear great and which was on the market for nearly a decade. We test the new Range Rover Sport in D350 Dynamic HSE guise…

This generation continues to turn heads. Land Rover's designers have refined the Range Rover Sport's familiar silhouette. It has been streamlined and looks sleek. The front end features a tapered grille, flanked by slim LED headlamps. The restyled LED rear lamps add to the dynamic yet elegant aesthetic.

The contemporary cabin exudes luxury, while high-quality materials and technologies abound. A large touchscreen infotainment system, replete with Apple CarPlay/Android Auto, takes centre stage. The multifunction steering wheel was a joy to operate, with the neatly laid out buttons at the touch of your thumbs. However, the tech is not exclusive to the driver or front passenger.

Another notable feature is the climate control set-up. The system is incorporated into each pew, enabling all occupants to stay comfortable whatever the weather. In addition, the temperature can be operated before ingress (no more burning your legs on sun-baked leather seats following hanging around the mall for too long). And when on a long-distance journey, the rear occupants keep themselves entertained by the front headrest-mounted displays and Land Rover-branded headsets.

## DEEP DATA

**Price:** R2 413 600 **Engine:** 3.0 L, 6-cyl, turbodiesel **Transmission:** 8-spd AT **Driven wheels:** 4 **Power:** 258 kW @ 4 000 r/min **Torque:** 700 Nm @ 1 500/3 000 r/min **0-100 km/h:** 5.9 seconds **Top speed:** 234 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 7.4 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 222 g/km **Length:** 4 946 mm **Height:** 1 820 mm **Width:** 2 047 mm **Wheelbase:** 2 997 **Weight:** 2 360 kg **Luggage capacity:** 647-1 491 L **Fuel tank:** 80 L **Warranty:** 5 years/100 000 km **Maintenance plan:** 5 years/100 000 km

There may be more sporty SUVs on the market; however, the (2 360 kg) Range Rover Sport D350 is no slouch (it is the Sport, after all), with a claimed 0–100 km/h sprint time of 5.9 seconds. The 3.0-litre six-cylinder turbodiesel delivers, not only in the performance stakes, but in fuel economy (for an engine of this size, at least; we matched the claimed 7.4 L/100 km during the test period).

The steering feel remains familiar Range Rover Sport. It is well weighted and relays oodles of feedback to the palms, allowing easy manoeuvrability of this British barge. The air-suspension system soaked up road imperfections with aplomb. With the latter set-up, the company has introduced switchable air springs to the Range Rover Sport.

Safety is always a crucial consideration, and the new Range Rover Sport boasts a wealth of advanced safety features. These include automatic emergency braking, lane-departure warning and collision-prevention assistance.

## THE VERDICT

# 4.5/5

The new Range Rover Sport is nothing less than exceptional. It combines style, tech and a comfortable ride, while it remains dynamically included; something for which its namesake has become well known. However, this generation takes it a step up ... way up. Whether commuting in town, heading on long-distance journeys or explore the roads less travelled, the Range Rover Sport has you covered. We maintain this model tested here is the one to have.

# TOYOTA RAV4 2.5 PHEV E-FOUR CVT

Toyota SA has introduced a few RAV4 PHEV units to SA to 'test the waters'. So, following a test, do we believe it should (officially) make its way to local shores?

**Words:** Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier

⊕ effortless drive; supple suspension; power delivery; fuel economy ⊖ not much

Having attended this year's State of the Motoring Industry (SOMI) address, we were impressed with Toyota's approach to its future. The Japanese automaker is arguably the firm with one of the most logical (and practical) ideas for the future of mobility. Whereas some automakers are fully set on producing only battery electric vehicles (BEV), Toyota plans on taking a holistic approach, pursuing every option while continuing to build cars that meet the real-life needs of people. Of course, as the world moves towards electrified and fully electric mobility, these will include Toyotas of several varieties: hybrids (HEV), plug-in hybrids (PHEV) and BEVs. The company also mentioned the viability of synthetic fuels and hydrogen for internal combustion engines (ICE).

According to Toyota Motors South Africa (TSAM) president and CEO Andrew Kirby at SOMI 2023: "For some markets, BEVs are the answer, but for others – like ours – we have to recognise we can only fully adopt this technology when our infrastructure can support them at scale." So, while we wait for SA's EV-charging infrastructure – not to mention the ongoing electricity crisis – to improve, the answer to lower-emissions mobility locally is HEVs and PHEVs. Of these, the former has seen remarkable growth in sales, undoubtedly owing to the increase in more cost-friendly options. PHEV sales have also increased, though not so much as there are not many available in SA. Those that are tend to be on the pricier side of the spectrum. However, PHEVs offer more electric-only range and, as a result, much better fuel economy, so it is a worthy addition to any automaker's

new-energy vehicle (NEV) portfolio. Although, it is best to test the waters before doing so. Which brings me to the RAV4 tested here.

Introduced to SA to test customer response, infrastructure requirements, vehicle behaviour and other technical aspects, this RAV4 represents the second phase of TSAM's NEV roll-out plan. TSAM says the purpose of this pilot programme is to allow it to provide customers with a holistic, and tested, solution.

The RAV4 PHEV features a 136 kW/227 Nm 2.5-litre atmospheric ICE (driving the front wheels via a CVT) coupled with an 18.1 kWh lithium-ion battery and a duo of electric motors sited on the fore and aft axles, respectively. This makes it all-wheel drive (the E-Four system switches between all- and two-wheel drive). The front and rear electric motors produce 134 kW/270 Nm and 40 kW/121 Nm, respectively. This brings the total power output to 225 kW. Toyota refrained to quote the overall torque. That said, during the test period, it seemed plentiful, considering the immediate throttle response provided when EV mode is activated.

There are are four driving modes – HV, the one mentioned above, Auto EV/HV and Charging. With HV activated, the RAV4 PHEV operates as a traditional hybrid but it favours EV mode. Here, it can travel up to 80 km on electricity alone when the battery is fully charged and depending on your driving style, of course. Auto EV/HV mode automatically switches between HV and EV modes to suit the conditions. In Charging mode, the ICE recharges the battery as you drive, and once fully charged, HV mode is activated.

Two recharging solutions are available: Toyota Mode 2 and Mode 3. The former allows charging at home through an AC 220–240 V outlet, allowing for a full charge in seven to nine hours. Mode 3 allows DC fast charging and replenishes the battery in 2.5 hours.

So, with the RAV4 PHEV's plug-in hybrid tech covered, how does it drive? As mentioned, the response was immediate when in its default setting. The quick power delivery remains a novel feeling. Who would have thought a RAV4 could elicit a grin when pulling away? The pure-electric range is sufficient in town.

And on the open road or to a weekend destination, HV mode kicks in. Sure, the consumption increases but we still managed an average of mid-6.0 L/100 km, which is commendable for a family SUV.

The ride quality was tops. Despite riding on 19-inch alloy wheels, the supple suspension set-up soaked up road scars. Couple that with the admirably low NVH levels, and the overall driving experience was comfortable.

Like its stablemates, the RAV4 PHEV cuts a handsome figure, thanks to its model-specific design elements. Based on GX-R trim, it boasts a generous amount of standard equipment, such as 9.0-inch touchscreen infotainment incorporating Apple CarPlay/ Android Auto, wireless smartphone charging, keyless entry, dual-zone climate control and front seat heating and ventilation. A digital rear-view mirror is also present. ▲

## DEEP DATA

**Price:** n/a **Engine:** 2.5 L, 4-cyl, petrol plug-in hybrid **Transmission:** CVT **Driven wheels:** A **Power:** 225 kW @ 6 000 r/min **Torque:** 227 Nm @ 3 200–3 700 r/min **0-100 km/h:** 6.2 seconds **Top speed:** 180 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 1.0 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 22 g/km **Length:** 4 600 mm **Height:** 1 685 mm **Width:** 1 855 mm **Wheelbase:** 2 690 mm **Weight:** 1 910 kg **Luggage capacity:** 490 L **Fuel tank:** 55 L **Warranty:** n/a **Maintenance plan:** n/a

PLUG-IN HYBRID

## THE VERDICT

4.5/5

This new-energy RAV4 is a superb package, with its plug-in hybrid powertrain delivering a top-notch driving experience and its generous amount of standard specification. We cannot wait to see the RAV4 PHEV on local shores. Although pricing will be fundamental.

# HONDA CIVIC TYPE R

Does the new Civic Type R live up to its namesake's legacy? We take it for a dance.

**Words:** Marius Boonzaaier mariusboonzaier

- ⊕ best manual 'box in the world?; front-end grip; generously equipped
- ⊖ does it look too tame against its predecessor?; a couple of creaks in the interior

Honda's halo hatchback has an illustrious legacy. From the EK9 of the late '90s to the generations that followed, the latest of which – the sixth – was revealed on the Civic Type R's Silver jubilee. But first, allow me to reminisce…

I vividly remember the time I spent in the low-slung driver's seat of the previous Civic Type R, entering a corner, left foot on the clutch, right foot on the brakes – one step, two step – as if doing a little dance while swapping cogs. The FK8 was first-class.

With the introduction of the fifth generation's successor, I wondered whether the new model would be as sublime to drive as its predecessor. The K20C1 powertrain employed by its forebear has been carried over to the FL5's engine bay and the six-speed manual gearbox has remained. However, for the sixth iteration, Honda has made significant updates to these items, including the chassis, to ensure it lives up to the prerequisites the Civic Type R has become renowned for; being the most engaging hot hatch.

I pressed the engine start button. The FL5's heart began beating as the mixture of fuel and air ignited in each of its four chambers. The 2.0-litre petrol, which has been equipped with a redesigned turbocharger, has been tuned to produce 7 kW/20 Nm more than it did in the FK8, making this Civic Type R the most powerful of its namesake. In addition, airflow to the breathing apparatus has been increased, thanks to a larger grille opening and radiator, and the fitment of a new fan.

In addition to these revisions, the exterior dimensions have increased, allowing for enhanced driving dynamics (and a more capacious cabin. And spacious it is!). The fore and aft tracks are 26 and 25 mm wider, while the wheelbase has been stretched by 36 mm.

As the test unit idled, again I wondered whether it would be good or even better than its forebear. It is best not to wait around too long as the dance floor awaits.

One step. The Brembo brakes bit hard. Two step. The revised six-speeder, replete with rev matching, is arguably the best manual transmission available in any car. Third gear. With each shift, the

## DEEP DATA

**Price:** R979 000 **Engine:** 2.0 L, 4-cyl, turbopetrol **Transmission:** 6-spd MT **Driven wheels:** F **Power:** 235 kW @ 6 500 r/min **Torque:** 420 Nm @ 2 600-4 000 r/min **0-100 km/h:** 5.5 seconds **Top speed:** 272 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 8.4 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 198 g/km **Length:** 4 594 mm **Height:** 1 407 mm **Width:** 1 890 mm **Wheelbase:** 2 735 mm **Weight:** 1 432 kg **Luggage capacity:** 410-1 212 L **Fuel tank:** 47 L **Warranty:** 5 years/200 000 km **Service plan:** 5 years/90 000 km

four-cylinder symphony became more enhanced, courtesy of the new exhaust system's active valve. The only gripe I had with the transmission was that the taller cogs' gearing felt rather long.

The steering is pin-sharp. The amount of grip provided by the front end and Michelin Pilot Sport 4S rubber – wrapped around 19-inch alloys – was remarkable and unlike any front-wheel-drive vehicle I have ever sampled.

It may sound like the Civic Type R is too focused on dynamism (it is, after all, the quickest front-wheel-drive hot hatch around the Nürburgring Nordschleife). Yet it is not as uncomfortable as you would expect and it ships with a generous amount of features – convenience- and safety-related – as standard. For example, the interior features digital instruments; an Apple CarPlay/Android Auto-enabled, 9.0-inch touchscreen infotainment system; wireless charging; and dual-zone climate.

Then there are those form-hugging bucket seats. Safety items include eight airbags, Isofix anchorages, lane-keep assist and a collision mitigation braking system. Dare we say it is a hot hatch for the family? **A**

## THE VERDICT

# 4.5/5

The new Civic Type R is sublime, unbelievably so. No, believably. Its predecessor was exceptional, so it would possibly be even more so. And it is. The FL5 sits in the upper echelons of its segment. Take a bow, Honda. The dance continues.

## Honda-hot hatch hall of fame

**1997 • EK9**
The EK9 shared many characteristics with the Integra Type R, including the omission of sound deadening and weight-saving measures, a hand-ported K16B engine, a front helical limited-slip differential and a close-ratio transmission. The 1.6-litre four-pot, with a five-speed manual, produced 136 kW and 160 Nm, available from 8 200 and 7 500 r/min, respectively.

**2001 • EP3**
Honda's K20A 2.0-litre four-cylinder and a six-speed manual were introduced to the EP3. The second iteration's i-VTEC powertrain produced 147 kW in the European versions, while it was uprated to the tune of 158 kW for the JDM market.

**2007 • FN2**
The third-gen Civic Type R hatch's high-revving 2.0-litre was coupled with a six-speed manual, sending 148 kW/193 Nm to the front axle for a claimed a 0-100 km/h sprint time of 6.6 seconds and a top speed of 235 km/h.

**2015 • FK2**
The fourth generation of Honda's halo hatch sported a sonorous 2.0-litre VTEC turbopetrol, churning out 228 kW and 400 Nm. It revved to 7 000 r/min. The FK2 was fitted with "pioneering" chassic tech for improved handling.

**2017 • FK8**
"Engineered from the ground up", the FK8's six-speed cog swapper featured a new single flywheel. The gearbox had a lower final gear ratio for enhanced acceleration. Rev-matching was also present. The K20C1 power unit from the FK2 was carried over to this iteration.

# SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 1.5 GLX MT

Ah, the Grand Vitara, a car I'm overly qualified to have an opinion about. Allow me to explain.

**Words:** Calvin Fisher  CalvinFisher_ZA

⊕ handsome design; generously equipped; ride quality ⊖ mild-hybrid model too expensive?

GRAND VITARA

Just over a decade ago, I was the custodian to a long-term Suzuki Grand Vitara. It was the square-jawed predecessor, the third-generation model still constructed via a ladder-frame chassis. In that year, I pointed its metallic-grey bonnet everywhere, racking up many miles through road trips, gravel missions and more. The off-road experiences were never too gnarly and I was perfectly fine with soft-roading.

As South Africans, we love to get our (cars') undercarriages dirty, but that seldom, in practical terms, requires a lockable diff. We largely wind up on dirt roads leading to wine farms, bike trails and the occasional, oh, I don't know. paintball exercise? A highlight for me was a trip from Cape Town to Johannesburg, fully laden with five passengers, much luggage and a pair of prams. That's hard work!

I missed that car once it left my garage. However, this was the start of Suzuki's rise in popularity, so, fortunately, I would often see them in traffic.

## DEEP DATA

**Price:** R397 900 **Engine:** 1.5 L, 4-cyl, petrol **Transmission:** 5-spd AT **Driven wheels:** F **Power:** 77 kW @ 6 000 r/min **Torque:** 138 Nm @ 4 400 r/min **0-100 km/h:** n/a **Top speed:** 165 km/h **Fuel consumption:** 6.0 L/100 km **$CO_2$:** 142 g/km **Length:** 4 345 mm **Height:** 1 645 mm **Width:** 1 795 mm **Wheelbase:** 2 600 mm **Weight:** 1 190 kg **Luggage capacity:** 310-1 147 L **Fuel tank:** 45 L **Warranty:** 5 years/200 000 km **Service plan:** 6 years/90 000 km

Fast forward to present times… The Japanese brand is thriving! And the Vitara badge endured, though without 'Grand' attached to it. You found it on the firm's flagship SUV and the budget-orientated Brezza derivative.

The latest iteration has welcomed back the 'Grand' denomination to the Vitara. And that brings me to the week I spent with the new generation. I used the test car for school runs, shopping trips (and errands of this nature), and enjoyed two trips to the Garden Route, both of which were conducted in severe Cape weather (think thunderstorms and lightning, acreage of mud and clay … you get the idea).

I spent most time with the R529 000 flagship, the 1.5 Hybrid AllGrip GLX shown here. This variant sports a mild-hybrid powertrain and Suzuki's AllGrip all-wheel-drive system. If I have to be brutally honest, this is not the derivative I would recommend. See, despite its Grand stature, it essentially replaces the Brezza in terms of size and, if you can believe it, when looking lower down in the range, gets quite close to it in price, too. The entry-level Grand Vitara sells for R339 900, and it's worth noting it is still well-appointed. So, instead, let me focus on the model I believe is the sweet spot in the range – the Grand Vitara 1.5 GLX in five-speed manual guise – which is priced at R397 900. Yes, it is only front-wheel drive, but that's fine, even for gravel. Sure, you will have to row your own gears (the four-speed automatic model costs R20 000 more). But at that price, I think the range-topping GLX is an incredibly compelling package.

The list of standard features is exhaustive. Think wireless charging; a 9.0-inch touchscreen infotainment system, replete with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay screen mirroring; a head-up display; a sunroof, and more. The cabin is incredibly comfortable and well-appointed for pretty much any sort of South African roadtrip.

Bar the 76 kW/137 Nm 1.5-litre mild-hybrid, six-speed automatic model, which employs the K15C variant of Suzuki's popular K15 series of engines, the range is powered by the firm's naturally aspirated 1.5-litre K15B unit. The four-cylinder petrol motor produces 77 kW and 138 Nm. It is the very same power unit that did duty in the Vitara Brezza, including myriad Suzuki's current products and, let's be honest, several of Toyota's Suzuki-based offerings, like the new Urban Cruiser (featured on p. 46).

The K15B-powered Grand Vitara drives just as well as its mild-hybrid sibling.The engine never felt lacking, the helm was gracious with its feedback and the suspension arrangement felt supple, while firming up when being twisted through the bends.

## THE VERDICT

4/5

The new Grand Vitara is handsome and safe, and the Suzuki badge a desirable one. I can imagine we will be seeing a slew of them on our roads, whether it is in town, on the highway, or on stretches of gravel. My old 2010 Grand Vitara would be proud.

# RIDING SHOTGUN WITH JACK PAROW

Jack Parow joins us in the back of the new 7 Series for a chat about his latest album, wine label and what we can expect in the future from the South African rapper.

Words: Vann van Staden @winewheelsandwatches

The king of Afrikaans rap music, Jack Parow, is in the house. Well, to be completely accurate, the new BMW 7 Series, in which we were cruising around. That said, the new 7 (tested in i7 format on p. 94) is, technically speaking, the size of a house. So, yes, he is in the house.

I have been fortunate to interview my fair share of cool people, and Zander – that's what his friends call him (maybe I'm one of them now?) – is at the top of the list. He still remains 'cooler as ekke', though my mom still thinks I'm the coolest, so that's a win in my book.

**VANN: WELCOME TO MY HOUSE.**

**JACK PAROW:** Yes, this is how I must live my life (referring to the luxurious interior of the 740i we are being driven in … as it should be).

**V: IT IS PRACTICALLY THE SIZE OF A SEA POINT FLAT.**

**JP** I think when I stayed in Sea Point, my flat was even smaller.

**V: IN MY OPINION, THE BACK SEAT IS WHERE ALL THE MAGIC HAPPENS. TECH-CENTRAL.**

**JP** I am a very gadgety kinda guy. These door-handle touchscreens are the business. Charging points for days as well. What more do you need?

*We spent a good 15 minutes playing around with all the cool features of the 7: the BMW Theatre screen, the lounge mode; everything was tried and tested. Parow approved.*

**V: YOU ARE AN ICON IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT YOU HAVE MADE IT HUGE OVERSEAS AS WELL. YOU ARE CONSTANTLY HEADING OUT TO EUROPE. I KNOW YOU HAVE GREAT TIES THERE. WHAT'S THE LATEST?**

**JP** They have been great to me! I have my own festival there called Parow Fest, which I do every two years. I am looking to bring it to SA in the future. I'm flippen lucky. Europe has shown me a lot of support over the years. When *Cooler as ekke* came out, it topped the charts on a few radio stations there.

That's mental! To hit number one with an Afrikaans song in a foreign country – legendary status right there!

**V: YOUR NEW ALBUM, *DIE EVENGELIE VAN GOEIE TYE* IS EPIC.**

**JP** Ja, dankie! It's going great.

SKUD WIT
WIT WYN
ROOI WYN
1.5 L WHITE
1.5 L RED
THIS BOX CONTAINS

JUS LIKE PAPA

**V: HOW DO THINGS WORK ON ALBUM SALES NOW THAT ONE CANNOT REALLY BUY TRADITIONAL CDs ANYMORE? OBVIOUSLY ITUNES, ETC., BUT HOW'S THAT CHANGE BEEN?**

**JP** From the get-go I have been onboard with the change. It's my vibe. My first proper in-store album was a flashdrive. I love streaming. I get to reach a lot more people through it.

**V: YOU HAVE CREATED A CULTURE IN THIS COUNTRY. ENGLISH, AFRIKAANS, ISIXHOSA, ZULU; EVERYONE LOVES YOU. I HAVE ENGLISH MATES THAT HEARD I'M INTERVIEWING YOU AND THEY WENT NUTS. I ASKED THEM TO NAME A TUNE OF YOURS, AND WITHOUT SKIPPING A BEAT, THE ANSWER WAS *COOLER AS EKKE*. IT'S A CULT SONG AND YOU HAVE SO MANY OTHER SONGS THAT HAVE JUST SUNK IN AND FORMED PART OF OUR HERITAGE.**

**JP** It has been nearly 15 years since the release and to still have people pumping it is epic. I'm very grateful for the support. We have a lekker country, with lekker people who love to listen to kief tunes.

HAN KJØBENHAVN
WIT WYN
ROOI WYN

**V: AND THAT'S NOT WHERE IT ENDS FOR YOU. YOU HAVE YOUR OWN BRANDY, WHICH HAS BEEN A MASSIVE SUCCESS AND, NOW, YOU ALSO HAVE A WINE LABEL, 'HEELTYD SPEELTYD'.**

**JP** I am very proud of it. At the end of the day, music stays my number one, but to do fun stuff and creative things using my platform; I'm very lucky to do that. It's also the first of its kind to have two taps on one box. I love that about it.

Say what you want about Jack Parow, but he is one of the most humble and kindest people you will ever meet. He is a born entrepreneur and doesn't sit still for one second.

# Ford Ranger 2.0L BiT 4x4 Stormtrak 10AT

CHAPTER 2/2

FUEL CONSUMPTION
**10.2 L/100 KM**

DISTANCE COMPLETED
**1531 KM**

**Words: Vann van Staden** winewheelsandwatches

Okay, so hear me out. We live in a world where phones, however 'smart' they are, rarely get used for phone calls. I suspect my phone has not been taken off the 'silent' mode for the last five years. It gets used as an alarm, a camera, a radio, to check the weather, and the list goes on. Do not be fooled; it is not just phones that have become devices whose primary use has shifted. Think of the humble bakkie. Sure, it takes you from point A to point B, but it also does a tonne more that's not transport related. You can charge your phone via a USB port (though not revolutionary; my 2011 Jeep also has one), but my trusty Cherokee does not have two 12 V sockets and an AC converter 230 V/150 W power socket. So guess who will be taking their bar fridge with them on the next camping trip? The added tech does make life easier with practical things, but there are also those moments where a bakkie surprises you yet still allows the opportunity to look badass.

Forget the old tonneau covers. We now have cool covers for the loading bay; you need not lift a finger while removing it. Press down on a button, and the Mountain Top roller shutter opens and closes. How's that for tech? Although the new Ranger has hit our shores, this previous generation still has loads to offer. Of the former model, why wouldn't you want to own a Stormtrak? It is like a motel on wheels (yes, I did say motel as it's not quite like the Four Seasons, which the latest iteration certainly is ... and more). But it is everything you need under one roof.

HOWZIT!
KK 48 WC GP

# Suzuki Celerio 1.0 GL MT

CHAPTER 2/2

FUEL CONSUMPTION
**5.8 L/100 KM**

DISTANCE COMPLETED
**1 257 KM**

**Words: Marius Boonzaier** mariusboonzaier

In the first chapter (issue 07) of my time with the Suzuki Celerio, I wrote that a long-term test car is one with which many memories are made. And this rang true of the Japanese automaker's small hatch, which my girlfriend and I endearingly dubbed 'The Celeers'. In my six-month stint, the Silky Silver metallic press unit accompanied us to our favourite swimming spot in Cape Town for many refreshing (read freezing) early-morning swims; it made a lovely road-trip companion when I headed to Hartenbos for a holiday, and it proved its worth as a mini moving car when we finally found and moved into a new apartment.

The Celeers was commendable in town. Arguably, this is where it is most at home. That said, it fared well on the long-distance journey to the buzzing coastal town of Hartenbos. Before setting off, I activated Apple CarPlay by plugging my smartphone into the USB port. (Side note: as the USB port is sited low down in front of the gear lever, it was not easy to access at night in the dark, even with the cabin light switched on.) The 49 kW/89 Nm triple was sufficiently punchy when cruising on straight and downhill stretches of tarmac. However, the 1.0-litre naturally aspirated engine lost some of its breath on steep inclines. Fuel consumption improved. The boot's capacity was sufficient for all my luggage. I could reach my destination and then some. A day trip to Buffels Bay was also memorable.

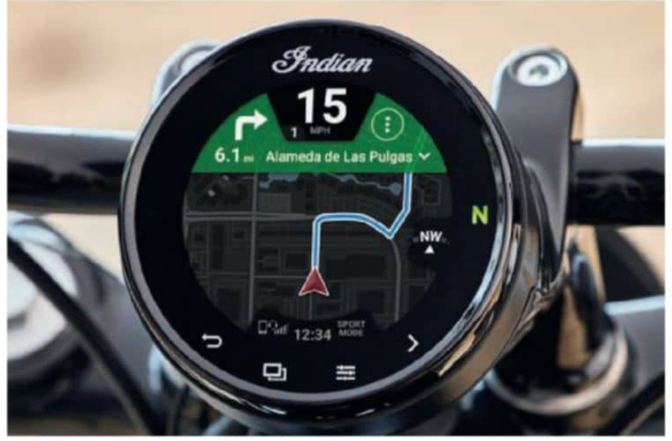
So, the boot was big enough for groceries, travel bags and beach necessities but just how did the Celerio do when taken out of its comfort zone and used to move around a trio of guitars, amplifiers and speakers, a turntable and boxes of vinyl records, books and model cars? In short, with the rear backrests folded down, all these items could be loaded with ease. And there was some space left!

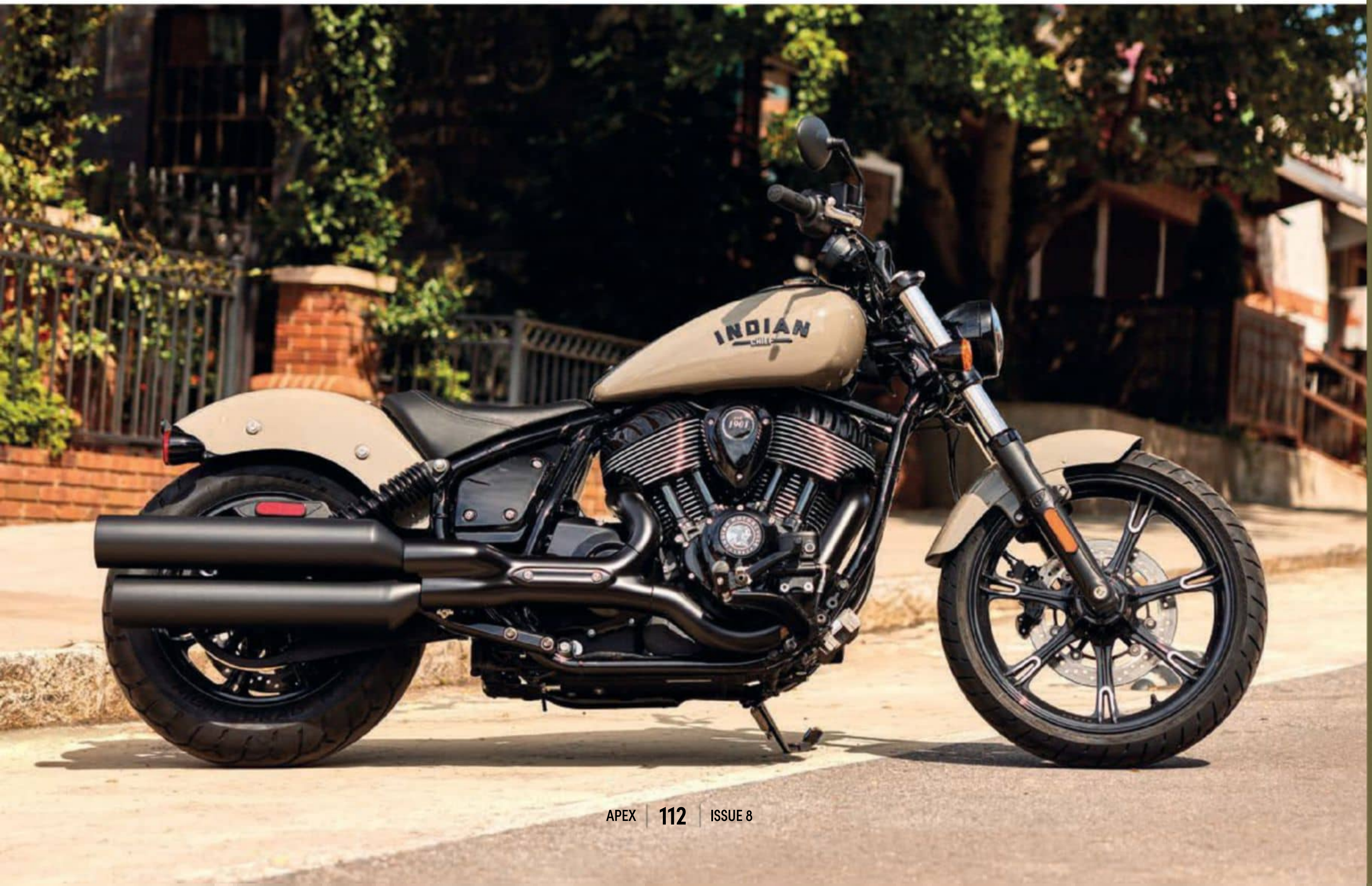
So, with us now moved into a new apartment and my time with the Celerio at an end, it's time to move out of this Suzuki and into another, my Jimny. The brand truly has a knack for building characterful and honest cars. The Celerio is no exception.

# Commander in chief

Paying homage to its ancestors, the Chief Dark Horse is a menacing motorcycle blending old-school with contemporary. But it's no dark horse. It is the commander-in-chief.

**Words: Vann van Staden** winewheelsandwatches





In terms of motorcycles, Indian Motorcycles has always been a brand associated with power, style and innovation. And its latest model, the Chief Dark Horse, is no exception. With its bold and beautiful design, it demands attention. This bike is the epitome of cool, from its sleek lines to its dark and menacing colour scheme. But there's more to the Chief Dark Horse than just its looks… It boasts a powerful engine that delivers an exhilarating ride. So whether you're a diehard enthusiast or just someone who appreciates great design, the Chief Dark Horse will leave a lasting impression.

The design draws inspiration from the classic Indian Chief motorcycles of 1921. The designers at Indian Motorcycles wanted to create a bike that would pay homage to the classic design while incorporating modern features and technology. Indeed, the Chief Dark Horse perfectly blends old-school and contemporary. It cuts a dashing figure.

The dark and menacing colour scheme is modern and edgy. The bike's fenders and fuel tank have been redesigned for a more streamlined appearance. The bike also features a blacked-out exhaust system and engine, which adds to its menacing look. The black elements contrast perfectly with the chrome accents on the handlebars and wheels.

The headlamp has a sleek and functional design, providing ample lighting for night rides while adding to the bike's overall look. The instrument panel has been designed for maximum functionality, with a classic analogue speedometer and a digital display that provides all the necessary information. A USB charging port is present, enabling riders to charge their devices while on the go.

The bike's seat has been designed for maximum comfort, with a low profile and ample padding. (If you feel like sharing the open road with a passenger, you can add a detachable passenger seat as an optional extra.) The bike's handlebars were designed for a relaxed riding position, suitable for long rides.

However, the Chief Dark Horse is not just a beautiful motorbike. It features impressive specifications. The bike is powered by an air-cooled Thunder Stroke 116 V-twin engine that delivers 126 Nm of torque. This engine is mated to a six-speed transmission, replete with a wet-clutch plate, making gear shifts smooth and effortless. The fuel tank has a capacity of 15.1 litres.

One of the most notable features of the Chief Dark Horse is its keyless ignition. This feature allows the rider to start the bike without fumbling for keys. The bike also comes with cruise control, which makes long rides less tiring. The suspension arrangement adds to the comfort. The set-up features a telescopic fork in the front and a single shock in the rear. The bike's handling is smooth and predictable. The Chief Dark Horse has a ground clearance of 125 mm, making it suitable for most types of terrain.

Like the Chief Dark Horse, getting a bike that will turn heads and leave a lasting impression is a surefire way to earn street cred. With its bold and beautiful design, powerful engine and impressive features, this motorcycle perfectly blends old-school and modern. Pricing starts at R415 000.

# THE BOSS

An illustrious South African special, the Opel Kadett GSi Superboss was born to be driven.

Words: Marius Boonzaier mariusboonzaier
Photos: Diwan Krige diwan_krige

Bruce Springsteen's (the Boss) catalogue comprises several songs – such as *Born to Run* and *Thunder Road* – about a couple who leaves their hometown and heads out on a journey. It was most likely in the '57 Chevy Bel Air convertible. It was the first car he owned and about which he is purported to have written these songs. In these tunes, the Boss is the narrator who is trying to convince his beloved to join him for the ride.

One Saturday evening, I convinced my girlfriend (not in song, mind you, as I'm no Springsteen) to join me for a drive in SentiMETAL's meticulously restored 1992 Opel Kadett GSi Superboss. We had been invited to join a gathering of the classic-car arm of cars.co.za the following morning at Lourensford Wine Estate and the picturesque road that is Clarence Drive. She indulged me, happily agreeing to come along for the drive.

The Sunday morning was chilly. However, when turning the ignition switch, warmth filled the cabin as the 2.0-litre atmospheric four-pot idled. Before setting off, Hannes Oosthuizen, who spearheads SentiMETAL, gave me a quick run-through of the Kadett Superboss, showing me (on my knees and peeking under the red bodywork) just how low it rides from the ground (speed bumps have to be avoided at all costs). He added that he hoped I had done some push-ups to handle the weighty steering set-up.

Audible thunks accompanied the closing of the doors. Seated low on the comfortable, fabric-upholstered driver's pew and my preferred driving position dialled in, I subtly depressed the throttle while lifting my left foot off the clutch. It took some time to get used to the mechanical workings of this special Kadett. At low speeds, the steering was the heaviest of any car I've ever sampled and it does not want to be driven slowly.

As the highway stretched ahead, I obliged, depressing the throttle. The engine responded. The revs rose. The Superboss is quick. Yet, it was surprisingly comfortable on the open road. We rolled down the windows for cool air (no air-con here). A naturally aspirated tune filtered through the interior. The exhaust note sounded glorious, raspy like a Springsteen guitar riff.

Now acquainted with the Kadett Superboss, we parked at Lourensford Estate for the SentiMETAL gathering, where it was displayed with other marvellous metal. The Superboss is an extraordinary vehicle. Built as a homologation special to compete against the BMW 325is in the Group N production-car championship – where the Kadett Superboss claimed three consecutive victories – it is a home-grown hero. Just 500 were produced. How many still exist? We were told fewer than one-fifth of these are on the register. So it was welcome to see this 1992 example wasn't the only Superboss at the gathering.

It is worth noting it held a world record. For nearly two decades, the Superboss' engine had the most torque per litre (114 Nm/litre) of any normally aspirated car. This would be broken only in 2009, when Ferrari introduced the 458. With this fact in mind, I yearned to return to the driver's pew and get the Superboss' rubber on a sinuous mountain road.

With the first bend approaching and considering the weight of the steering, I calculated the necessary input. Right foot on the brake pedal, left foot depressing the clutch, swap to a lower gear. There it was again, that guttural tune. Unlike manoeuvring at low speeds, the heavy steering wasn't uncomfortable around corners. It was welcomed. The feedback from the tarmac was relayed through the tiller to the palms. Then a long stretch of blacktop beckoned. The Superboss is a true-blue analogue driver's car, a hot hatch for the ages.

At his 'Springsteen on Broadway' performance, the Boss mentioned, "There's nothing like that moment in your life of being young and leaving some place … All that youthful freedom, you finally feel untethered from everything you've ever known."

The Kadett Superboss elicited a feeling of youthful freedom in us. It was quite unlike any other hot hatch I have ever encountered. And my, does it want to be driven. Cue Springsteen's *Born to Run*.

*A big thanks to Hannes Oosthuizen and SentiMETAL for allowing us to sample this South African special and the talented Diwan Krige for the photography. It was an absolute privilege.*

**For nearly two decades, the Superboss' engine had the most torque per litre (114 Nm/litre) of any normally aspirated car.**

## OPEL KADETT GSI SUPERBOSS

**Engine:** 2.0 L, 4-cyl, petrol
**Transmission:** 5-spd MT
**Driven wheels:** F
**Power:** 125 kW @ 6 200 r/min
**Torque:** 228 Nm @ 4 800 r/min
**0–100 km/h:** 7.6 seconds
**Top speed:** 223 km/h
**Weight:** 971 kg
**Examples made:** 500

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# MAT WATSON / ON CARS

matwatsononcars

With a redline of 11 100 r/min, the Valkyrie plays a V12 symphony, much like an opera singer belting out a top C – right next to you.

After driving the Aston Martin Valkyrie, what sticks in my mind isn't the searing performance of the hand-built, 746 kW, 6.5-litre naturally aspirated engine. It was the noise it made (the Valkyrie revs to a whopping 11 100 r/min!).

From a distance, it is a rousing, fossil-fuelled V12 symphony that could move an EU emissions regulator to rethink banning the internal combustion engine. But from inside the tiny, uninsulated cabin, it was less pleasant. Imagine having an opera singer belt out a top C right into your ear, and you are only halfway there. I'll never forget its shriek, though, mainly because the tinnitus would not let me.

It was one of the things I was really looking forward to when I got the opportunity to drive Aston Martin's long-awaited hypercar. But while you may enjoy an opera singer belting out a top C when you're sat in a box, it borders on unpleasant when this is right next to you.

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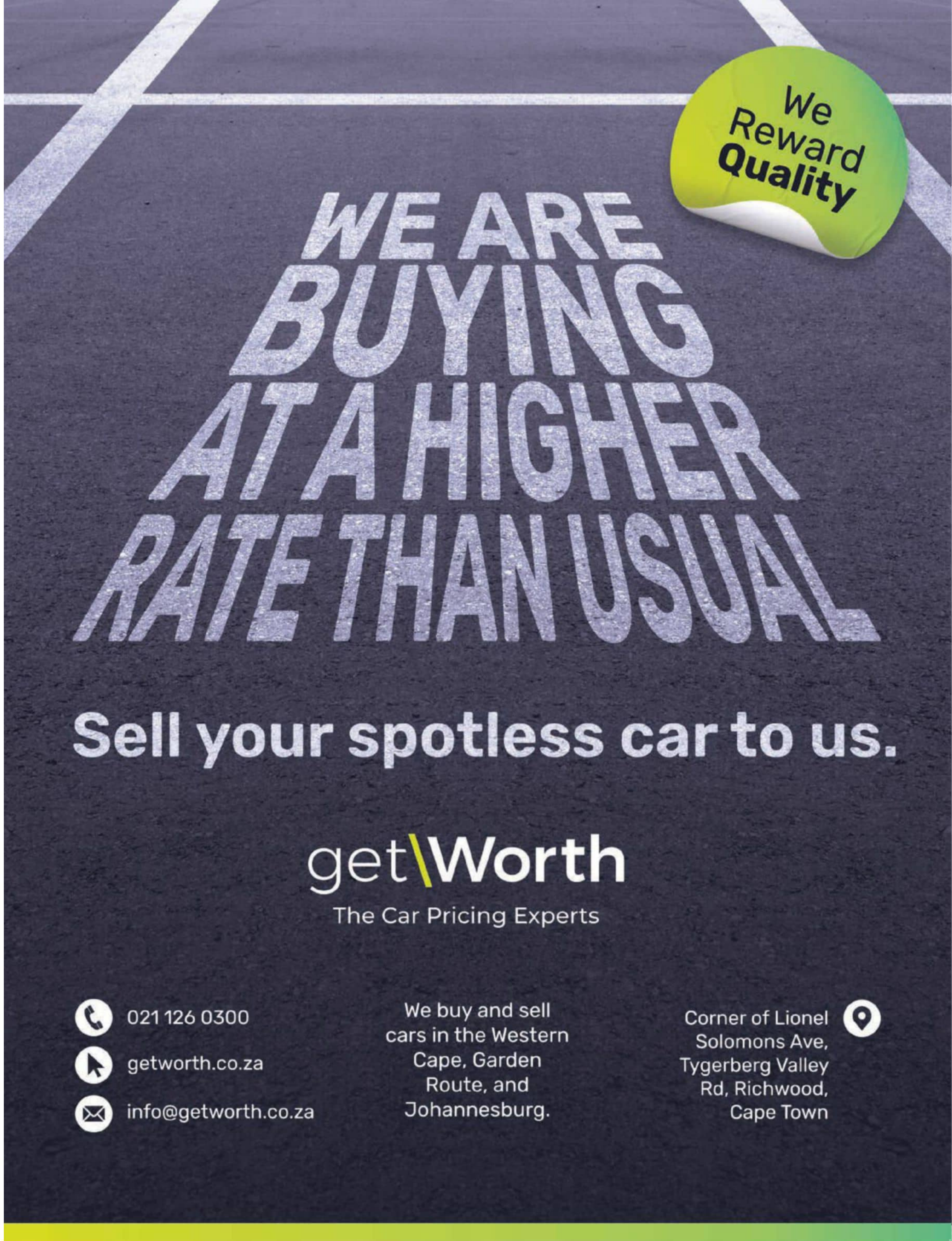

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